



Friends of the Siskiyou County Museum

Summer 2025 newsletter

Museum News & Events

Siskiyou Stories

Oct. 11: *Halloween - Tales from the Grave* with Gail Jenner

Nov. 8: *Flock Family History and Stories* with Shari Flock Sandahl

Let us know if you have any ideas for potential speakers.

Outdoor Museum Workers

We have had so much help cleaning up the Outdoor Museum this year! It started with **CalFire** felling the hazardous dead pines, cutting the logs into firewood lengths for the veterans and chipping the branches. Next, the **Sheriff's Dept. Day Reporters** weeded almost the entire acreage! Then, the Siskiyou County Dept. of Education **Workability Crew** (high school aged kids) worked their magic for 2 1/2 days raking, pruning, leaf blowing and re-finishing some benches. Meanwhile, deteriorating shake roofs on two of the historic buildings have been replaced by **Custom Constructions of California**. The new roofs were funded by **Ford Family Foundation, Pacific Power Foundation, Walmart** and **Friends of the Siskiyou County Museum**.

Thank you all for your excellent work!

New Entryway Displays

The museum space in the entryway is where the Friends create rotating exhibits, which stay up for about a year. The *Hall of Fame* has been removed and we have been busy installing an assortment of displays loosely gathered under the title *Remember When.....* The subjects include some former Miner Street businesses, a collection of vintage toys, and the Siskiyou Trailriders (no longer an active group).

Bob Rice Klamath River Collection

Another of the entryway displays is a case with a small sample of the Bob Rice Klamath River Collection recently donated to the museum. We are just getting started digitizing this extensive amount of research material. It should be ready and available to the public for research towards the end of the year.

Model Railroad and Museum Upstairs

The Model Railroad has been completely re-vamped by volunteer Byran Duncan. It will be ready for our "grand re-opening" of the upstairs once our fire escape stairs have been rebuilt. Upstairs has been closed since October but the contractors will be here around mid-August.

Museum Family Fun Day - Sept. 27

This event has grown into one of the premier Yreka things-to-do, and it's all free! (excepting a handful of vendors). Gold panning will be back this year, the costume group from Central Point, the Art Cart, and so much more. We're in the early planning stages but if you're interested in being a volunteer helper call the museum (842-3836) or send an email to fscmuseum@gmail.com.

Scholarship Winners

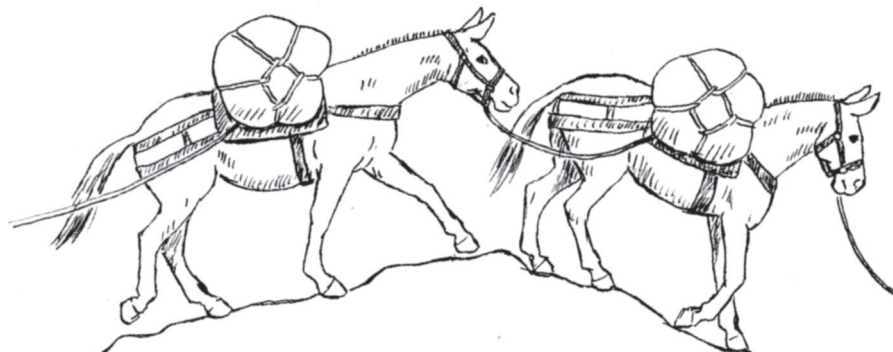
We had another great batch of applications, and this year we are able to award three \$500 scholarship. The recipients are Lorena Moser, Brendon Masson and Carlotta Christian. All three are Yreka High School graduates.

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Pack Trains and Horse Races

By May Hazel Southern

This piece is an excerpt from a long article found in the collection of several notebooks full of May Southern's writings recently donated to the museum. In her later years, after a long career with Southern Pacific Railroad, May Southern became a prolific writer of Shasta, Trinity and Siskiyou County histories. She was born in 1867 at Southern's Stage Stop at Hazel Creek (now Sims) in the Sacramento River canyon below Dunsmuir, an establishment run by her parents along the Siskiyou Trail. She was educated for a time in Yreka at the Saint Joseph Academy for Young Ladies, a convent school that operated from 1872 to 1882. This story takes place on the other (earlier) trail north from the Sacramento Valley that went over Scott Mountain, into Scott Valley and over to Yreka.

Packing between Shasta City, Yreka and Weaverville and the mining camps that surrounded them went on for many years. During the winter of 1854-55, 1,876 mules were engaged in packing between these points. The writer's uncle, George L. Greathouse, was one of the pioneer owners of a pack train, having entered the business in 1852. In 1854, with his brother Ridgley, he established a passenger mule train from Shasta City to Callahan's Ranch, connecting there with McComb and Company's stage for Yreka, and at Shasta City with California Stage Company.

There has never been a more picturesque sight in the mountains of California than the long strings of pack trains wending their way down the steep mountainside. Each mule watched his step and carefully examined the trail to protect himself and his cargo from injury. In winter the mountainsides were a sheet of ice and snow, and if in the mule's judgment it was too slippery to find a secure foothold, he used his head and looked about for a good landing place below, braced his front legs and slid down the decline on his haunches to a safe landing. The mule had an expression of patient experience which plainly showed that no roads yet to come would astonish him. He struggled bravely along under such bulky cargos as buggies, windows, boxes,

barrels, bars of iron, chairs, tables, plows, and all sorts of other things. One large mule carried a printing press for the *Yreka Herald* weighing 430 pounds over Trinity and Scott Mountains. While descending the latter, the mule staggered under the top-heavy press which threw him down into the canyon; mule and press were a total loss. The press had cost \$600 in San Francisco and the freight to Yreka was \$900.

The usual load for a mule was 300 pounds. Pack trains varied in length from 20 to 200 mules, traveling 25 to 30 miles a day. As a rule, the packers were Mexicans, hired by the owners of the train. A man always rode at the front to act as guide and to stop the train if anything went wrong. The leader, or "bell mule" was perfectly white so he could be seen as well as heard. The Mexicans' "hippah" and "mullah" were perfectly understood by the mules. Long ears reversed all down the line as the master's command was obeyed. When a mule got out of line, he was addressed with a string of strong Mexican oaths interpreted by the mule to mean "-----get back in place," and he did. When the packers camped for the night, the mules were all lined up in a row and unloaded. Next morning each one stepped up and picked out his own "Aparayo," or pack saddle, and patiently waited until his turn came to be loaded.

Those pack saddles were very heavy, weighing about 100 pounds. The sides were flexible so they would fit the mule's back and were easily strapped on. Travelers and drivers of pack trains always dreaded to meet an on-coming train on the steep mountain sides, as the mules would not leave the well worn trail they knew to be safe and if crowded to the edge were seized with panic, so those who were compelled to take the outside also took a chance of being crowded over the bank and down to the bottom of the canyon. The mule was a faithful pioneer of the gold trails, and was the most abused of animals, depending entirely on the whims and wishes of the master, tugging at a heavy load all day, drenched and shivering in the cold rain or snow while the master filled up on hot toddies at every way-side bar. Without the aid of these patient animals the gold might still be in the hills.

In the fall of 1851, Cram, Rodgers & Co. started an express line between Shasta City and Yreka, connecting at Shasta with Wells Fargo & Co. At this time Indians were thick in the Trinity trail and the pioneer express company had many skirmishes with them. In April, 1852 forty Indians were killed before the train could get through.

Greathouse Bros. in partnership with Hugh Slicer, in August 1855 started an express, banking and passenger business. They carried letters, small packages and treasure, bought and sold gold dust and did a general

collection and commission business from their banking house in Yreka, connecting in Shasta City with Wells Fargo. Hugh Slicer in 1854 had brought two Concord coaches into Yreka from Oregon. An excuse of a road had existed between Yreka and Callahan's; with the two coaches they put on a line of stages, carrying [the] passengers [south from Callahan's] over Scott and Trinity Mountains on mule back to connect at Shasta City with the California Stage Co., who later bought them [Greathouse and Slicer] out in 1857.

The mounted express was much faster than the ordinary pack train. There was great rivalry between competing express companies. Each wished to establish a record for fast traveling and soon they began racing their express riders. The riders were all young, fearless men who could ride and shoot with the best of them. Love of adventure had started them for California and they found it most abundantly on the mountain trails that connected the mining camps. Racing called out their sporting blood and put them on their mettle. Hundreds of races were run at great expense and loss of stock.

Robbery on the trail was of frequent occurrence. Two express riders usually rode together for mutual protection; they were heavily armed to defend their lives and the treasure they carried against road agents. The writer's uncle George L. Greathouse once foiled two bandits and saved a large amount of treasure by

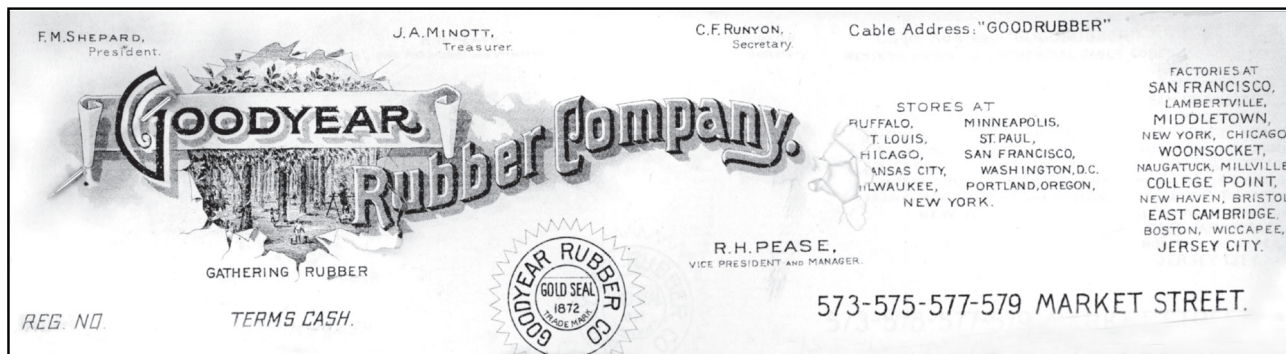
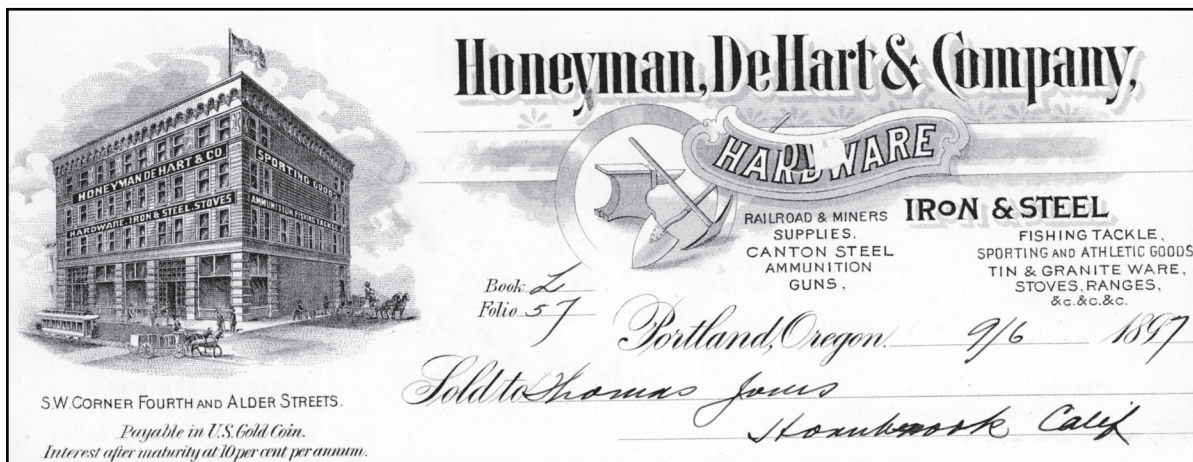


In Etna, 30 mules patiently wait behind their packs for the photographer to finish so they can be loaded up and on their way up the trail.

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A Letterhead Sampler

A recently discovered unmarked cardboard box turned out to be filled with hundreds of invoices issued to the T. Jones store in Hornbrook dated around the turn of the 20th century. "How boring!," you might think, yet these reams of mundane paperwork were topped with remarkable letterhead graphics from the suppliers, mostly San Francisco-based, who shipped their wares 300 miles north. It wasn't until this time period that the use of letterheads became a standard business practice.



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the aid of a Negro servant, Uncle Baccus, who accompanied him over the mountains. They had stopped for the night at the foot of Trinity Mountain. Greathouse, after leaving orders at the counter to be called at 6 am, retired early. Uncle Baccus went out and took a seat at the further end of the veranda. It was a dark night and he could not be distinguished from the blackness. Presently two men came close to him and discussed, in low tones, plans to waylay and rob Greathouse whom they had overheard put in the order at the desk to be called. After the bandits left, Baccus crept into Greathouse's

room and whispered, "Massa George, you's gwin to be awake?"

"Yes, what is it, Baccus?"

"Two robbers is agwin to kill us in the mornin' for sure and rob the mule."

Greathouse who now well knew the danger they were facing, directed Baccus to go at midnight in a round-about way to the corral and saddle the mules and lead them to a designated point on the trail where he would join him, and by 6am they were well out of the range of the robbers' bullets. ..

Beyond simply identifying the business itself, these elaborate graphics reflected a growing emphasis on professionalism and they began to be used for marketing purposes. You will note that some of these letterheads depict images of the business's big city headquarters or factories, obviously a point of pride for them.



WE ARE NOT ACCOUNTABLE FOR LOSS OR DAMAGE TO GOODS DURING SHIPPING RECEIPT FROM TRANSPORTATION COMPANY, AND NO GOODS WILL BE TAKEN BACK AND CREDITED UNLESS OUR CONSENT HAS BEEN FIRST OBTAINED.

INCORPORATED AUGUST 28TH 1882.



Payable in U.S. Gold Coin.

TERMS _____

Sacramento Jan 27 1891

M. D. Jones

Henry

HOLBROOK, MERRILL & STETSON,

IMPORTERS & DEALERS IN

STOVES, METALS, TIN WARE,

PUMPS, IRON PIPE, HOUSE FURNISHING GOODS & TINNERS TRIMMINGS.

Jobbing of every description done to order.

N^{OS} 221 & 223 J STREET.

BOOK _____

DATE _____

SHIPPED _____

Interest will be charged at the rate of One per cent per month on all bills not paid when due.

Anglo American Crockery and Glassware Co.

INCORPORATED.

IMPORTERS
AND WHOLESALE
DEALERS IN

**CROCKERY, CHINA
AND GLASSWARE**

CUTLERY,
LAMPS,
CHANDELIERS,
PLATEDWARE
ETC.

108 & 110 PINE STREET

A Family of Artisans

It's hard to imagine that the simple act of exhibiting a splendid landscape painting in the US Congress could influence upcoming legislation, but that is exactly what happened at the hands of two women painters with deep Siskiyou County connections. Their goal, and the goal of other contemporary artists and writers, was to encourage the establishment of new western National Parks, and to promote the new concept of "conservation" of natural resources that was coming to light as the Industrial Age unfolded. This was around the turn of the 20th century, a time when all photography was black and white, and travel from the East (where the politicians lived) to the West was not so easily done.

This is a story of the Russell family, a family that has roots on both sides of the Siskiyou Mountains, with descendants still living here today. It begins with Tennessee native James Howard Russell. Born in 1823, he was orphaned at age five after which an aunt took him in. At age 15 he left Ohio to apprentice with a Pittsburg marble worker and stone carver, learning a marketable skill that would serve him well in his future life out west.

As with so many others, gold fever was the inspiration for a move across the country in 1849. James mined the Feather River for a couple of years then moved north with three partners, Gibbs, Hare and Barron. All but Hare took up Donation Land Claims on the north side of the mountains between Yreka and Ashland, Oregon alongside the Siskiyou Trail. (Before the Homestead Act, the Donation Land Claim Act outlined a land pro-

curement procedure designed to help populate the Oregon Territory.) Here the men built a stage stop called Mountain House, or Barron's. This structure, built at the juncture of their land parcels where it helped satisfy the requirements of their claims, still stands beside what is called Old Siskiyou Highway.

James also worked as a packer along the trail. He is credited with bringing the first kitten into the area, his Mountain House neighbor's daughters, the Hill sisters, being the recipients. In 1854 at age 31 James married one of them, 16 year old Ann Hill. The young family moved to Yreka, where Ann's aunt kept a boarding house. James drove a herd of cattle over the Siskiyou, bought "the Herzog place" and worked as a butcher for four years. He was contracted to provide meat for laborers working on the Big Ditch, at that time a struggling enterprise that failed to ever pay up.

The family returned to Southern Oregon when James was offered the job of doing the stone work on Judge Dowell's home in Jacksonville. This home, still stand-



(left) Barron's Mountain House still stands. (right) James H. Russell's grave in the Hill family cemetery beside Emigrant Lake outside of Ashland.



(left) Ann Russell with her stone carving mallet and Temperance Bow. (right) J.B. Russel's stone carving mallet on display at the Siskiyou County Museum.

ing, has three marble fire places and marble front steps. So James resumed his marble carving trade, opened a marble quarry up Coleman Creek (near Phoenix), built a water powered marble mill, and later another one on Ashland Creek.

After the railroad was completed across the Siskiyou (1887), James preferred to have softer, easier to carve marble shipped from the east for his shop. But earlier in that decade James had secured a government contract to cut a block of Oregon marble for the Washington Monument. The monument was only half built before the Civil War started. When more funds were secured after the war it was decided each state should contribute a stone block for the upper half. James cut a block of the designated size from a quarry near Williams, Oregon, but the block cracked before it reached it railhead in Redding. A second block had to be cut and taken by wagon to Redding, lowering James' profit to practically nothing. It is unconfirmed whether James' block was actually used as official records show that Oregon's block was carved with the state seal by an Albany sculptor, Frank Wood. However, more than one block could come from a state; 195 blocks were contributed from states, cities, organizations, individuals, etc.

Not long after returning to Oregon, Ann joined James in the business. Her artistic abilities flowered as she too honed the stone carving skill. When James shattered his leg in a mining venture and it took 18 month to heal,

Ann grew into a stone carver just as highly skilled as her husband, despite having eleven children. Thereafter, she was an integral part of Ashland Marble Works. She was one of the few women carvers to be found anywhere in the country, and she ran the business on her own after her husband's death in 1895. Russell-carved monuments are found in cemeteries in Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake, Douglas (Oregon) and Siskiyou and Shasta counties.

One of Ann's favorite things to carve was a Temperance Bow, a motif found on many of her headstone carvings. She was known to picket Ashland saloons with her temperance message, and she was also an ardent Prohibitionist. One of her stand-alone Temperance Bows was exhibited and won a prize in the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

Ann strongly encouraged her children to pursue any artistic inclinations. Thus, her son James ("J. B.") became an accomplished stone carver himself, working out of his shop in Yreka, and two of Ann's daughters became painters of some renown.

Sisters Grace Russell Fountain (1858-1942) and Mabel Russell Lowther (1875 – 1959) were 16 years apart in age and both painted mainly landscapes. Mt. Shasta and Crater Lake were frequent subjects. At the time they were evolving into accomplished artists, the plan to set aside remarkable natural areas fas National Parks

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a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, EIN 82-1833303
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Board Meetings:
 Second Tuesdays @ 10:15 am
 Everyone Welcome!



for public enjoyment gained a footing nationwide. One of Grace's paintings is said to have influenced President Theodore Roosevelt to sign legislation establishing the fifth National Park, Crater Lake, in 1902. Grace had also provided illustrations for an article about Crater Lake, "The Sea of Silence," written by Joaquin Miller for *Sunset Magazine*, then a Southern Pacific Railroad publication that promoted the sights along their train routes. One of Mabel's paintings exhibited in Congress encouraged Federal funding to build roads and trails on public lands. Other artists and writers around the country were doing similar work. Unfortunately, efforts promoting Mt. Shasta as a National Park did not succeed.

As a single woman, Mabel homesteaded a ranch in the Big Springs area, with its unsurpassed vistas of Mt. Shasta. Later, at the age of 50, she married her 70 year-old Methodist preacher. She continued to paint her large canvases, including a 4' x 6' sunrise view of Mt. Shasta and a 5' x 6' canvas of a fire on the Crater Lake rim. Grace moved to the Bay Area soon after the 1906 earthquake, eventually opening a studio in the "art colony" on the Oakland estate of Joaquin Miller, a lifelong friend. A large painting of the Marble Mountains by Grace hung in the Yreka Inn for many years. One of

her Mt. Shasta paintings that measures 6' x 7' is in the collection of Redding's Turtle Bay Museum.

As a young child, brother "J.B." (James Buchanan, 1856-1952) started his vocation by tending his father's saws at the family's Oregon marble works. In 1883 he moved to Yreka and opened his own shop, which was in continuous operation 68 years, until 1941. In 1915 he designed and built a large block arch featuring many varieties of locally sourced decorative stones for the Siskiyou County exhibit at the Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. The arch was later erected at the entrance to the Miner Street Park, where it still stands.

In later years J.B. did lapidary work and maintained his large rock and mineral collection. He was an ardent supporter of local history, and something of a character about town in his striped pants, cutaway jacket, and cane and top hat that had belonged to his father.

The Russell family artwork housed in museums, private collections and area cemeteries will ensure this Siskiyou pioneer family's legacy. © Jill Livingston

(above) The Grace Russell painting at Klamath County Museum. (right) Unknown what Mabel Russell is doing in her watch-adorned dress, but F. W. Hogg was a well known San Francisco jeweler and watchmaker.

