

LANE  
COUNTY  
HISTORY  
MUSEUM

# the ARTIFACT

SUMMER 2018 | NO. 228 | EXHIBITS, EVENTS, AND HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS



LOOKING FORWARD • LANE COUNTY MUSIC HISTORY • DIRECTOR'S CORNER  
TRIVIA NIGHTS! • VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: DAVID BEAVER • HISTORY HERE  
HATTIE MAE • 1910's SLANG • MAKE A DONATION

# LANE COUNTY HISTORY MUSEUM

## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

### WHEN AND WHERE

Tuesday–Saturday 10am–4pm  
740 West 13th Avenue, Eugene, OR

### CALL US

Office (541) 682-4242

### TICKETS

Adults .....\$5  
Seniors (60+)..... \$3  
Youth (15–17)..... \$1.00  
Kids (14 & under)..... FREE  
Members..... FREE

*Go to [LCHM.org](http://LCHM.org) to learn more about free entry dates.*

### FOLLOW US

[facebook.com/lchm.org/](https://facebook.com/lchm.org/)  
[flickr.com/photos/lanehistory/](https://flickr.com/photos/lanehistory/)  
[youtube.com/c/LchmOrg](https://youtube.com/c/LchmOrg)

### BECOME A MEMBER

Sign up! The benefits include:

- Free admission to museum
- Invitations to members-only events
- Discount at the museum store
- Discount on research requests
- Subscription to *The Artifact* and *Lane County Historian*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### SHOP AT THE MUSEUM STORE

Come by our store for new books, cards, post cards, posters, photos, old fashioned toys, and much more! Inventory reduction sale—50% off!

### THE ARTIFACT IS PRODUCED BY:

Editor & Design: Stephen O'Brien, LCHM staff members, and Guest contributors

# LOOKING FORWARD

## JULY

# 11

### Trivia Night

5:30 pm–7:00 pm. 5th St. Public Market. Public Market Eateries. Friends, Food, Facts and FUN! Bring a team or come and make new friends. You could win fabulous prizes! Tables ready 5:30, Trivia starts at 6.

# 17

*Lane County: Would You Believe It?* exhibit opens Featuring never before seen photos and artifacts, and the amazing stories behind them. Learn things you never knew about our local history.

## AUGUST

# 3

### Clough Panel Interpretation

Lane County Courthouse. Freestanding interpretive panels for the Clough artwork installation. With support from Kenneth O'Connell.

## SEPTEMBER

# TBA

### Trivia Night

5:30 pm–7:00 pm. 5th St. Public Market. Public Market Eateries. Friends, Food, Facts and FUN! Bring a team or come and make new friends. You could win fabulous prizes! Tables ready 5:30, Trivia starts at 6.

# 24

### History Pub

WOW Hall. 7:00 pm program, doors at 6. Dr. Dennis Jenkins, UO, *Old Poop and the Peopling of the Americas*.

## OCTOBER

# 22

### History Pub

WOW Hall. 7:00 pm program, doors at 6. Author R. Gregory Nokes, *The Troubling Life of Peter Burnett*.

*Cover: ER50, The Burton Sisters Orchestra pose with their instruments in "Eskimo" costumes. Each of the 5 sisters wears fur-trimmed boots and hoods. They performed in this locally popular family musical group, 1927.*





Above: KE2176, Burton Sisters Orchestra. Image shows 5 sisters with the same hairstyle and costumes (including a giant bow in their hair) posing on stage with various instruments. "Burton Sisters" is painted on the drum set, April 15, 1929.

## LANE COUNTY MUSIC

by Nick Chase, Digital Archivist

This May I was scrolling through my FaceBook feed when I saw a familiar photo on a friend's post.

The photo in question was a Kennell Ellis studio portrait of the Burton Sisters, a local music act from the 1920's made up of 5 sisters, and a favorite subject of another local photographer, Elizabeth Romane.

I wondered which of my friends had shared this photo, and was pleased to discover it had been posted by the Lane County Music History Project – [www.lanemusichistory.com](http://www.lanemusichistory.com). The website is maintained and its contents researched by local resident, Vicky Gelatt. Vicky is a Lane County History Museum fan and enjoys including historic pictures from the LCHM collection to use in her project. I reached out to her to learn more.

Gelatt has been investigating the last 100 years in music across Lane County and regularly sources photos from the LCHM website. The site shares an immense variety of music and reaches back to the founding of Lane County in the 1850's and trails out in the 1990's. It's impressive how inclusive Vicky has been in her research. She's covered music history for 15 towns across Lane County.

The website is arranged so that you can look up venues, bands, even recording studios and labels (full disclosure, Gelatt is married to Tony Proveaux, long time Eugene studio owner).

In Eugene, we take for granted the local music scene, but I confess - Gelatt presents an eye-opening picture of music life in greater Lane County, particularly her documentation of music around the time of the county's beginnings.

Gelatt has availed herself of a variety of resources, not excluding visitor input. As you peruse the site, if you have information, be sure to click the "Contact Us" link at the top and share it to contribute to the site's growth and accuracy. Vicky will be glad to hear from you and grateful for the input.

Incidentally, the Burton Sisters Co-Ed Harmonizers Orchestra, as they were known, had a long-run in Eugene, and according to a 1928 press clipping quoted on the Lane County Music History website, appeared "...in novelty costumes and will feature a number of song and dance numbers, with saxophone solos and blues singing." LCHM has 25 original studio portraits of the Burton Sisters taken by Elizabeth Romane - also known for dressing her clients up in costumes - and two by Kennell Ellis. You can view the whole set on our website by following the Photo Collection link and searching using the single term "Burton."

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Bob Hart, Executive Director

Each July our Society begins a new fiscal year. Unlike the annual New Year's celebration on January 1st, entering into one of the coldest months of the year, early July marks the unofficial end of regular rains. We will now be predictably hot and dry through early October. Last year there was a lot of smoke in the summer air with a proliferation of forest fires. At least early in the fire season now, there is palpable excitement instead of smoke in the air. And the excitement is generated by the ideas being floated for our future!

With the upcoming expansion of the 5th St. Market District and the early support of U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, there is renewed momentum toward possible acquisition of the downtown U.S. Post Office, but for an expanded idea on this go-around, a combined history museum and visual arts center. The vision includes not only the National Register Art Deco post office building, but the adjacent sorting facility extending down 5th, wrapping around Olive and abutting the 6th St. Bar and Grill. It is a broader vision than ours of 2010-11, one that would need the cooperation of both the city and county, and the extension of the urban renewal tax district to include the post office block in order to benefit from tax increment financing.

This vision would create the cultural nexus downtown spoken about for years. And what better location than on the block immediately adjacent to the Hult Center? The project would probably also qualify for Oregon Lottery funding. The potential for public funds for the project could significantly advance our organizational timetable for relocation.

Meanwhile, there is discussion of the possibility of a satellite museum facility on all or a portion of the bottom floor of the affordable housing proposed on the former EWEB, now city site. And the Museum continues to push for a purpose-built modern environmentally-controlled collections storage facility at the Fairgrounds, which might be a really attractive idea if opened to use by multiple museums.



GN1095: Football game, University of Oregon against Washington State, 1939. Likely at Hayward Field.

We also look forward to the distinct possibility of future research efforts in conjunction with the University of Oregon and the Oregon Community Foundation at the Charles Applegate House in Yoncalla. And we welcome the potential collaboration with the Komemima Cultural Protection Association in the reconstruction of the Kalapuya tongue.

So the new fiscal year is alive with potential. You, our members, can help us achieve our long sought goal of a state of the art facility with the foot traffic we currently lack. Modern technology brings the potential of truly dynamic ways to engage our audiences, making the past relevant for both the present and the future.

In closing, I ask for a moment of silence for the UO's Hayward Field East Grandstand. As you probably saw in my May letter to the editor in the Register Guard, I was saddened by the rush to demolish and the lack of discussion of alternatives to demolition. It truly was a National Register-eligible structure.

Sincerely,

Bob Hart



# TRIVIA NIGHTS!

*by Jennifer Yeh, Membership & Volunteer Coordinator*

On July 11, Wednesday at 5:30PM the Lane County History Museum will have its third History Pub Trivia Night at the Eateries (formerly International Cafes) at 5th Street Public Market.

The events have attracted a diverse group of people and feature an eclectic array of questions ranging from local, state and national history as well as just interesting or odd facts - there really is something for everyone. Trivia Night tables are available at 5:30 pm and the questions go from 6 pm - 7 pm.

“We try to find questions that cover different topics, things that will be interesting to different age groups. We’ve had long-time locals, people passing through and children all enjoying the fun of trying to answer the questions,” explains LCHM Curator and Trivia Night host Faith Kreskey. “We’ve tried to make the events as accessible as possible, fun and engaging.”



We use a screen to display photographs, artifacts and the questions themselves. The use of the screen makes it easier for people who have hearing impairments and lets us share our vast photograph collection. It’s something that not many Trivia Nights do, and we’ve found it adds a lot to the experience.

Prizes are given out for Bonus Questions specifically related to LCHM and the winning team gets prizes and a photo with the coveted golden Gnome of Knowledge.

The 5th Street Public Market is a great location for this event because participants have multiple food and beverage options, it’s a relaxed environment and The Market generously lets LCHM use the space and their equipment free of charge. Trivia Nights are free and open to all ages.

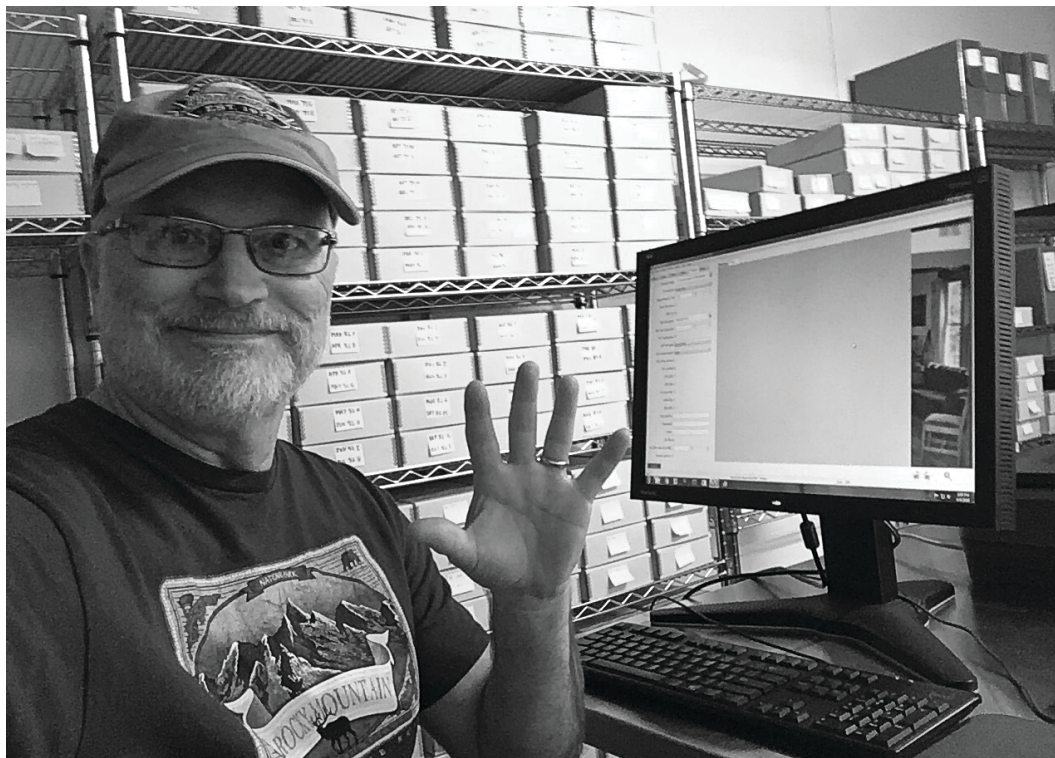


*Above: Ducky Damsels with the Gnome of Knowledge!*

*Left: Faith tests our knowledge of local history.*

## VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

by Jennifer Yeh, Membership & Volunteer Coordinator



***“Every time I scan a photo, I take a step back in time. I want to interact with the people, ask them about their lives, their hopes and dreams.”***

*David Beaver scanning a photo, 2018*

Volunteers make it possible for the Museum to do projects that we would otherwise not have the staff to accomplish. With the hiring of a Graphic Artist and Digital Archivist we had the capacity to add an additional volunteer in the Digital Archive department.

David Beaver has always been fascinated with the history of old photographs and artifacts. David had frequented the Museum over the years and became a member before volunteering. David told us, “I felt like [the Museum] could be a new home for me after retirement and the opportunity to work with a group of people who shared my passion.”

David’s assignment involves scanning historic photographs of Lane County. It is a slow, time-consuming and repetitive job, but he says it is also very rewarding, “Every time I scan a photo, I take a step back in time. I want to interact with the people, ask them about their lives, their hopes and dreams.”

Thankfully through David’s work to make more of our photograph collection available as high-quality scans they can be used for exhibits and online catalogues where the Museum hopes to share those stories of the people’s lives.

David has experience scanning his own family’s historic photograph collection and found that he had a particular interest in editing and cleaning those photographs. He found editing allowed for a better appreciation of what was being viewed, and ensured the preservation of his family’s history. David has also volunteered to receive additional training in photo editing so he can assist with that part of our digitalization projects as well.

If you are interested in volunteering with the Lane County History Museum we need people to help staff the Museum during the Lane County Fair July 18-22 from 11-6pm. Not only do you get into the Fair for free but you’ll be helping us reach a large audience through our exhibits. Call Jennifer at 541-682-4242 to volunteer.





GN4585, First passenger train to arrive at Oakridge. Steam locomotive and passenger cars wait at left; passengers disembark in center. Southern Pacific Company railroad depot is at far right, 1911.

## HISTORY HERE

*by Stephen O'Brien, Graphic Artist*

The first of many History Here posters is now in the wild. These posters are collaborations between the LCHM and other organizations, notably the Oakridge Travel Alliance, and the Sheldon McMurphy-Johnson House. The posters are historic photos from locations around Lane County, coupled with information, placed where the photo was taken. This is a great way to tell the public about some locations that may not seem historic at first glance.

The newest poster is going up in Oakridge, with information about logging teams, their peaveys, the railroad, and how to tell if a locomotive was coal or wood fired. Future posters are going in Creswell, Veneta, Florence, and Springfield. These will tell you about the schools and hotels, the mills and railyards, drive in theaters, and more!

## HATTIE MAE

*by Bob Hart, Executive Director*

Sometime in 2005, Hattie Mae Nixon, probably garbed in her trademark black outfit, visited the then Lane County Historical Museum. I found myself conversing with the first female extension service agent in Lane County and I was intrigued! I asked if she was ever the subject of an oral history interview and she said, no. So we made plans to rectify that situation.

Turns out that Hattie Mae was a professional museum volunteer. We used her as a docent on Saturdays, but on other days of the week she could be found at several other community museums, particularly the Museum of Natural and Cultural History and the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. Hattie was the widow of the late Max Nixon, a well-known gemologist and faculty member at the UO; Hattie's specialty was textiles.

She volunteered at LCHM for a little over 5 years. Amongst staff she had at least two distinctions: she and her car got locked in to the Fairgrounds one evening necessitating rescue by me, as well as being the only member of the museum volunteer staff to have her car broken into in the parking lot and having nothing stolen! I think Hattie May found me tolerable as I knew of some of the ancestral territory her family pioneered in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

After an absence of more than half a decade, matters concerning Hattie Mae resurfaced last week. A plain mailing envelope plainly marked from a legal firm arrived and turned out to contain a will. It seems that Hattie Mae, who had passed on in April, had remembered the LCHM, leaving us a \$10,000 gift. It is certain that Hattie Mae would approve of the allocation of her gift to the Digital Lab Project, enhancing accessibility for staff and researchers alike. Thank you, Hattie Mae!

# 1910's SLANG: SUM PUN'KINS!

by Faith Kreskey, Exhibits Curator

While researching something else entirely, as often happens a sport's column on page 2 of the June 13, 1913 Eugene Daily Guard with a curious phrase caught my eye:

The phrase "some pumpkins their own selves" raised a number of questions, mainly "What on earth?" The meaning of archaic slang can be hard to trace since it wasn't used in literary or academic writing. Instead, slang is found in ephemeral print media like broadsheets, magazines and newspapers. Even when examples of usage can be found, it can be hard to judge just how and when phrases came or went. In this case, "some pumpkins" has a long and illustrious history of use, and was related to a major fad in Lane County during the 1910s.

Digger deeper I found that the phrase "some pumpkins," also written "sum punkins" or "some pun'kins," was most heavily used between the years 1900 and 1920. The phrase "their own selves" was also a popular local turn of phrase during the same period, but that is a discussion for another day. Combining the two is fairly singular, only dared by this intrepid sports reporter. For a definition of the phrase, I looked to the 1896 edition of *Dialect Notes* published by The American Dialect Society. Note that Lowell and Bartlett are field researchers for the society.

"Some. To say of a woman that 'she looks some,' with emphasis on the some [cf. Bartlett], is equivalent to saying that she looks remarkably well. Lowell uses the expression. [Note also the New England phrase, 'some punkins,' to express a high degree of ability. 'He's some punkins.' Bartlett reports the phrase form the South and West.]"

That is to say, "some punkins" means something is great, derived from a use of "some" to say that someone is attractive. "Some punkins" originated in New England and is specifically associated with the region, but by the 1890s was also used in the Western United States.

The earliest appearances of the phrase in print are found in the 1840s, usually as jokes or comedic dialogues. Interestingly, the phrase is often used in passages of colloquial speech that tell gentle jokes about rural characters. Use of "punkins" to specify that a character is

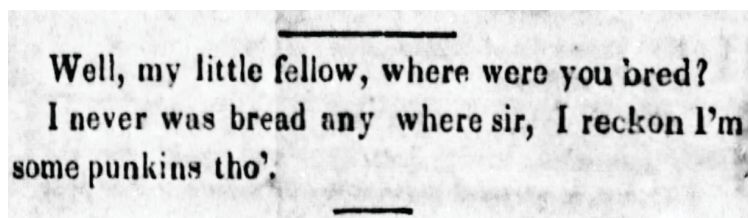


Local baseball coverage from June 13, 1913

from a rural area (with the implication that they are from New England specifically) is a recurring feature in this type of writing. It's often seen in southern newspapers in short, throwaway columns used to fill empty space.

Colloquialisms used in this way serve to denote the regional identity of the speaker. For instance, one of the first appearances of "punkin" in the United States can be found in "The Art of Speaking," a very short farce published in the March 11, 1797 edition of *The North-*





*A joke used as space filler on page 2 of the March 21, 1845 edition of the Vicksburg Tri-Weekly Sentinel (Vicksburg, Mississippi).*

Carolina Minerva and Fayetteville Advertiser from Fayetteville, North Carolina. The play is a debate between a gathering of men from various parts of the country over which is better: being married or being single. Brother Jonathan, the national personification of New England, speaks up for married life, extolling the virtues of his wife. In this story he is a pumpkin farmer.

Brother Jonathan had his origins in Revolutionary War propaganda, representing the fighting spirit and independence of the colonies. He later became a comedic stock character, appearing in penny newspapers and serial magazines. Letters, stories, and poems penned by "Brother Jonathan" were reprinted in papers until the 1840s, often written in a phonetic rendering of an exaggerated version of a New England accent. They feature big fish stories, malapropisms, and cock-eyed versions of old wives tales, and were most popular in the Southern States. Other versions of Brother Jonathan-type characters began appearing in the 1850s, including a character named Jedediah Parsly, an irascible farmer from "Down East."

The first known printed usage of "punkins" in Oregon appears in a Jedediah Parsly story about Thanksgiving titled "Jedediah Parsly's Parin' Bee." The story takes up the 6 of the 7 columns on the front page of the September 30, 1851 edition of *The Oregon Statesman* (Salem, Oregon). It tells the story of a "parin' bee," a party to prepare the food for a Thanksgiving feast that usually involved a contest to see who chopped the most evenly or fastest. "Punkins" figure heavily into the climax of a truly chaotic town gathering.

By the 1870s use of "punkin" was established as a comedic trademark of the New England accent. Cal Stewart (1856-1919) chose to use it heavily in his act that involved long form monologues about the town of "Punkin Center." Stewart spent his early life working in circuses, medicine shows and vaudeville as "Uncle Josh Weathersby from Way Down East," an updated Brother Jonathan character. He eventually published story collections, including

Uncle Josh's Punkin Centre Stories in 1905. In the story "Jim Lawson's Hoss Trade," Stewart refers to Jim as "some punkins on a swap." It also appears on the 1912 record "The Village Gossips" in a monologue: "I had my mind made up that I was some punkins!"

Uncle Josh was a pop phenomenon in the early 20th century, spawning imitators performing variations of Stewart's character. Advertisements for his records appear in Lane County papers throughout the early 1900s, along with numerous announcements for plays and vaudeville acts featuring Uncle Josh-type characters. Uncle Josh also appeared in magazines, and on copycat comedy records. It is likely that people picked up the regionalism "some punkins" through these comedy performances and recordings.

"Some punkins" makes its first appearance in print in Oregon in the September 8, 1905 edition of *The Morning Astorian*, referring to the agriculture of Astoria and Clatsop counties. The "punkin" fad infiltrated Lane County particularly deeply. On September 28, 1911 Junction City held its first Punkin Show, an event that was advertised as far afield as Salem and Portland. A column in the *Albany Democrat* on September 1, 1911 referred to the event as "Junctions' Punkins," a clear reference to Cal Stewart's Pun'kin Junction. This annual event was developed by the Women's Improvement Club of Junction City, and it was meant to highlight the agricultural produce and commercial development of the town. →

*An advertisement for a Cal Stewart copycat act. September 25, 1909 Morning Register (Eugene, Oregon).*

Eugene Theatre

**SATURDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 25th**

The Everlasting Success

UNCLE JOSH

See Uncle Josh  
at the  
County Fair

The Great New York  
Subway Scene

PERKINS

Presented by a Company of Singers, Dancers and Comedians

**Positively the Largest and Best Production  
Ever Given This Famous Play**

WATCH FOR THE BIG PARADE OF THE HAY-  
SEED BAND



## 1910's SLANG: SOME PUN'KINS

*Continued from previous page*

The first Punkin show involved grange displays of fall produce and livestock, a pumpkin related cooking contest, and a jack o' show. In 1913 "a cabinet of curiosities" that featured unusual antiques, books, Native American artifacts, and rocks, and a "baby contest along eugenic lines" known as the "Better Babies Show" was added to the festivities. The babies, aged from 2 to 4, were judged by Dr. Marion Ober, who was also in charge of the eugenics related exhibits at the Lane County Fair. This contest was changed to become a "Baby Carnival" in 1915.



ER69, Mary Helen Love poses in her crown as the "Queen of the Punkin Show" in 1915.

Oregon's forest fire loss for the summer is less than \$50. These wet summers have their advantages.

**Junction City is "some pumpkins" this week.**

*Notes from the September 22, 1916 Morning Register (Eugene, Oregon).*

In 1914 the Punkin Show introduced the "Punkin Queen," a popularity contest to be held during the event. The first woman crowned was only identified as "Queen Hannah." Competition became fierce for the title, and in 1915 Mary Helen Love won the contest with 7,088 votes, the majority of which were cast by Woodmen of the World members. Selma Strome was voted Juvenile Punkin Queen.

In 1916 the show had become so popular that Junction City discussed starting school later in September so everyone could participate more fully in the contest. The Eugene Guard on noted that "all of northern Lane County 'knocked off'" to go to the event. A parade featuring automobiles was added, along with displays of apples. Most importantly, the opening day on September featured a 2 foot diameter pumpkin pie that seems to have suffered some technical difficulties with regard to serving.

*A selection from the joke column "Airy Persiflage" published in the Eugene Morning Register, March 4, 1917.*

A newcomer stood talking with me  
at Willamette and Ninth,

And in the space of thirty minutes  
there passed more than twenty beautiful ladies

Who bowed to me in recognition  
of an acquaintance which I prize highly.

And I could see the stranger was  
much impressed,

And I'll bet he thinks I'm some  
punkins in this town.



# Sum Punkins

Well you may as well own up, for though we're sure some pumpkins in the Grocery Business, that isn't what we were going to say. No Sir-ee—we meant we are going to supply the town with pumpkins.

## For Hallowe'en

Lots of them—Little Pumpkins, Bigger Pumpkins, Big Pumpkins for Jack-o'-Lanterns for the kiddies to play with—pumpkins for mother to make pies with and best of all is they are all good pumpkins and you can get the littles ones for 5 cents apiece or less and big ones for 10 cents apiece or more, so you see you can't afford to do without one.

# Roseburg Rochdale Co

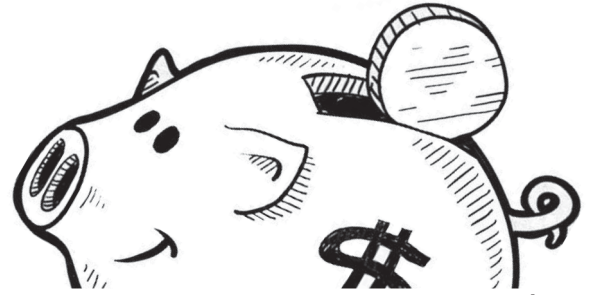
Phone 145.

Cor. Cass & Jackson.

*An ad for the Roseburg Rochdale Co. that appeared on page 3 of the October 29, 1912 Roseburg Review (Roseburg, Oregon).*

Punkin fever appears to have come to a head after the 1916 event, when news coverage of the Punkin Show dwindles down to a few mentions in social columns. One concerned citizen wrote a letter to the editor in the La Grande Observer (La Grande, Oregon) to point out that Oregon needed to focus on more than being the “punkin center of the commonwealth.” The Punkin Show continued into the 1920s, adding carnival rides and musical performances each evening, but it received less attention from the rest of the state. In 1926 The Junction City Punkin Show was fully abandoned. “Some punkins” continued to be a somewhat popular turn of phrase into the 1920s, but its usage began fading. 1925 saw the release of the film *Some Pun'kins* starring silent film star Charles Ray as his stock country bumpkin character. Sadly, the film is now lost. One of the last appearances of the phrase in print in Lane County appears in a letter to the editor about atomic energy and weapons written by Mae M. Knowles published in *The Eugene Guard* (Eugene, Oregon) on September 29, 1957. Knowles is invoking the good old days with her use of the phrase. It might be ripe for a comeback today.

Would you  
like to make a donation?



**Yes! I want to support Lane County Historical Society**

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- .....

- ☐ Check Enclosed. Please make checks payable to

### Lane County Historical Society

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- Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_
- Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I would like my gift to remain anonymous
- ☐ Name as it should appear for recognition

Please return this form with your check or payment to:  
Lane County Historical Society, PO Box 5407, Eugene, OR  
97405-3819.

To make a gift online, visit [lchm.org](http://lchm.org). Questions? Please call 541.682.4242 or email [volunteers@lchm.org](mailto:volunteers@lchm.org)



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# the ARTIFACT

Exhibits, events, and historical happenings

SUMMER 2018 NO. 228

*The Artifact is produced quarterly and distributed to members of the Lane County History Museum*

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