

ROGUE VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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The Rogue Digger is a publication of the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society (www.rvgsociety.org), which is a non-profit organization governed by a thirteen member Board consisting of elected officers, past president, and appointed directors of the Standing Committees, all with voting rights. A subscription to *The Rogue Digger* is included with membership. Annual dues are \$30 for an individual; additional members in the same household are \$15 each. Membership includes library checkout privileges. Our library website is www.rvgslibrary.org. Background map of Jackson County, OR and miner's image courtesy RVGS.

Editor's Note:

The Rogue Valley Genealogical Society has partnered with the Jacksonville Museum Quilters to present a series of talks on Genealogy and Quilts during 2013-2014. Here is a link to a schedule of those talks: <http://www.rvgsociety.org/pdf/GenealogyAndQuilts.pdf>. An illustrated schedule of those talks with photos of the featured quilts can be found on the Mountain Star Quilters Society website: <http://www.msquilters.com/>. Please visit that site to learn more about the series of talks and about quilts and quilters in Southern Oregon and Northern California.

JACKSON COUNTY GENEALOGY LIBRARY'S FIRST "GENEALOGY AND QUILTS" TALK

The Medford Railroad Centennial Quilt

by Nell Mathern



I'm Nell Mathern. I'm a quilter by hobby and a quilt historian by love. In my real job, before retirement, I worked in a medical lab, a needle in hand most of the time. Now I still have a needle in hand, just the kind that makes quilts.

Several years ago, when it was time for the Jacksonville Museum Quilters to take the "Train" quilt to the annual Medford Railroad Show, I discovered a problem. While looking through the collection of information on the quilt, I found the original artist sketch of the train, along with the overlay the quilters used to produce the applique pieces. At the bottom of the sketch were the words "Drawn by Carl Strand, Ashland." Then I noticed a 1985 *Medford Mail Tribune* newspaper article featuring a photograph of the quilt with Jime Matoush, curator of exhibits for the Southern Oregon Historical Society. I also found another newspaper article dated in 1979 that showed the founder of the Jacksonville Museum Quilters, Dora Scheidecker, quilting with a group of ladies, one of whom was Jean Strand. (Was there a relationship to Carl Strand?) Postcards of the Train quilt had on the back "drawn by Carl Strand." The label on the back of the quilt also had the name Carl Strand.

Who is Carl Strand and why is he important to the Medford Centennial Train Quilt?

At the Railroad Show that November we put out a plea to the public to help us identify Carl Strand. Was he into Railroading? Was he a professional artist? We hit a dead end.

One day in 2009 while at the old Genealogy Library on Houston Road, I happened to ask Chuck Eccleston if he knew Carl Strand. Chuck directed me right away to information about Jean Strand, who was Carl's wife. Jean had worked at the Genealogy Library, especially collecting the obits.

We brought up Carl's obituary and there were all the important things about Carl: his birthdate, his parents, his graduation as a chemical engineer, the fact that he was a



member of the Watercolor Society of Oregon, the Rogue Gallery in Medford and the First United Methodist Church. The obituary also identified his wife Jean and their children. And then it continued and I was so pleased to read, "*Mr. Strand did the basic design for the Railroad Quilt held by the Jackson County Historical Society.*" The train sketch must have been important to him for it to be mentioned in his obituary.

At that time, Jean was living near her daughter in Washington state and I had a contact. Carl's daughter, Laurel Strand, has set up a wonderful website for Carl: **C.P. Strand: In His Words.**

Laurel has transcribed what her father recorded in longhand, including his birth and death dates (August 6, 1920 – January 8, 2006), information about growing up in rural Iowa during the Great Depression, and letters he wrote over the decades to family members. This is one website that is very well put together. Laurel has created such a treasure for her family.

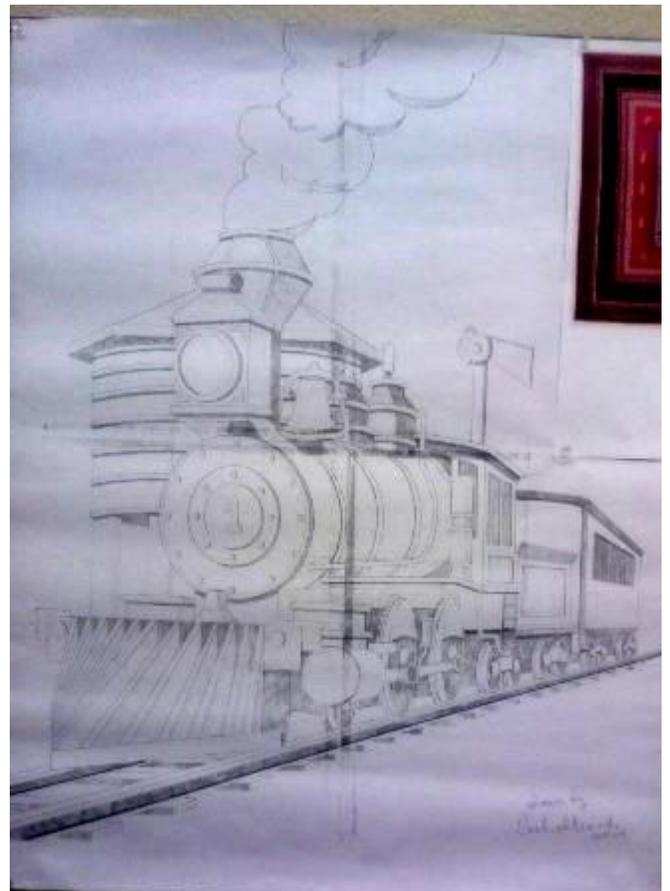
In the material transcribed so far, there hasn't been any mention about sketching the train, but Laurel hasn't put everything up on the site yet. Laurel sent me a photograph of her Dad with a dollhouse that he had built for his granddaughter. At right is a photo of Carl P. Strand holding Laurel.



LOOKING AT THE SKETCH

Looking at the sketch, you can see the detail Carl gave to the number one locomotive. I also presented the tissue paper overlay of the train that the quilters used on the fabric background to do the applique. A look at the overlay for the Train Quilt shows how the quilters would use it to create the applique pieces. Carl's sketch was just what the quilters needed to create the Medford Centennial Train quilt.

The quilt was made for the Medford Centennial (1885-1985). It celebrates the arrival of the Oregon and California Railroad tracks into the valley. Since Medford started as a railroad station, it was appropriate to put a railroad locomotive in the center of the quilt. Pears were appliqued around the first border to honor the valley's chief industry. The quilt measures 82" long by 75.5" wide.

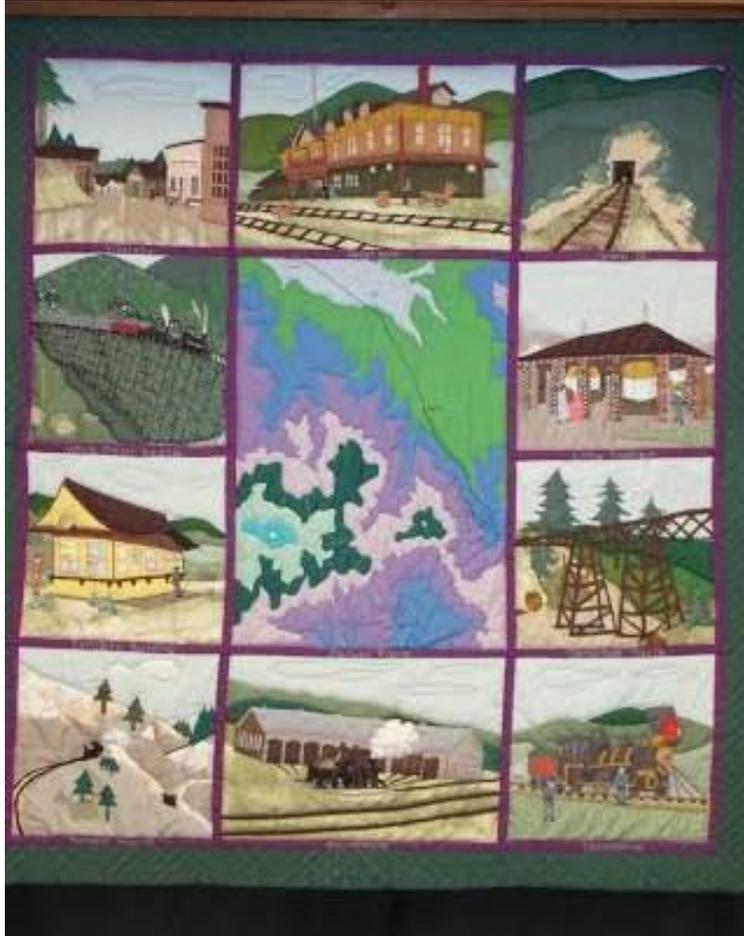


SECOND "GENEALOGY AND QUILTS" TALK

The Ashland Railroad Centennial Quilt

By Sue Waldron

November 26, 2013



Seventeen years ago, I designed the Ashland Railroad Centennial Quilt. Recently the Jacksonville Museum Quilters, who owned this quilt, donated it, along with ten others, to the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society for display in their library. I would like to share with you how this quilt came to be and how I consider it relevant to genealogy.

In September 1984, I decided to finish my college degree. I became a student at Southern Oregon College, now Southern Oregon University, for the next two years. I chose History as my major.

In my second year at SOC, I discovered Practicum Classes. These classes allowed me to choose a project in my major outside of structured classes, to work independently, and to earn credits toward graduation. What an eye opener!

At that time, the Southern Oregon Historical Society had a branch museum on the ground floor of the Chappell-Swedenburg House on SOC's campus. There were two very energetic museum managers at that time, Nan Hannon and Leslie Egger-Gould. They agreed to work with me.

My first Practicum Class involved organizing the Swedenburg research library and working with the volunteers. The second allowed me to suggest, research, and help mount a display of early Hairdressing tools.

My third Practicum class was this quilt.

There was a lot of talking going on in Ashland in the spring of 1986. People were looking for ways to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the completion of construction of railroad tracks over the Siskiyou Mountains. I had been a quilt maker since the early 1970s, so I decided to combine history and quilt making. The quilt turned out to be rather ambitious and more than my quilt skill level could handle. I approached Dora Scheidecker of the Jacksonville Museum Quilters with my idea. She said that the Jacksonville Museum Quilters would construct this quilt.

The quilt measures 94 inches wide x 107 inches long. It is constructed of cotton fabrics and was pieced and quilted by members of the Jacksonville Museum Quilters. There are eleven blocks of applique.

Let's start with the center block. One of the "facts" I found quite fascinating about the construction of the Oregon and California Railroad over the Siskiyou Mountains, was the route the tracks took south to the California state line—all of the loops, trestles and tunnels. I wondered how many people today know that route.

I borrowed a topographical map from the Geography Department and traced the portion of the map showing the land forms between Ashland and the California state line. I drew the map using 800 foot intervals of elevation. Then, to illustrate to the quilters how I envisioned the block, I found various colored sheets of tissue paper and created a pattern. That pattern was destroyed during the quilt making process.

The other ten blocks were chosen during a search of photographs in the Southern Oregon Historical Society's libraries in Jacksonville and Ashland. The procedure to create these quilt blocks involved turning the photographs into line drawings, unfortunately eliminating some details. The drawings were then enlarged to quilt block size, which was determined based on the dimensions of a queen-sized bed. All of which was turned over to the Jacksonville Museum Quilters, who made the quilt.

Starting in the upper left hand corner of the quilt you will see represented some of the structures built to complete the Oregon and California Railroad's route over the Siskiyou Mountains:

Town of Siskiyou was built between 1884 and 1885 just above today's intersection of Interstate 5 and the Mt. Ashland Ski Road. At one time the town included two hotels, an eating house, telegraph station and two railroad turn tables.

Depot Hotel was built in 1888. It had 60 lodging rooms and could seat 200 in the dining room. In 1900, lunch cost 50 cents and chicken fricassee was the only meal available. Southern Pacific ran the Hotel until 1927. The building was dismantled in 1937.

Tunnel 13 was built between 1886 and 1887. It is located south of the Town of Siskiyou and is 3,100 feet long. It was the site of the notorious DeAutremont train robbery in 1923.

Lithia Fountain was apparently built in 1905 as part of the Ashland Board of Trade's efforts to impress the many travelers passing through on their way to the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland. The stone work was done ". . . by Messrs Pennington and Sons, skilled stone cutters and monumental architects of Ashland."

Dollarhide Trestle was built between 1885 and 1886. It is located south of the Steinman wood lot at the point where the track turns back north headed for Tunnels 14 and 15. (The lumber was provided by the Dollarhide family from logs cut on their property.) The trestle is between 500 and 600 feet long and about 200 feet high. Southern Pacific began filling the crossing (adding walls around trestle supports) in either 1902 or 1904, completing the work in 1927.

Locomotive is called an “Atlantic” because it has a wheel structure of 4-4-2 (which means that it has four wheels in the engine truck, four wheels in the drive truck and two wheels in the trailing truck). The engine ran on steam, at first produced by wood and later by oil. This style of engine was in use from the 1880s until about 1920.

Roundhouse was built in the summer of 1888. By the 1920s there were 31 bays. Demolition began in 1953 with the removal of 16 bays. In 1986, one corner of the old building remained as part of a shop building. The turntable was filled in, not removed. The turntable required 80,000 bricks, making a total of nearly 500,000 bricks for the roundhouse and the turntable, all shipped from Anderson, California.

Tunnels 14 and 15 were constructed between 1886 and 1887. Tunnel 14 is 1,992 feet long and has a 14 degree curve. Tunnel 15 is 268 feet long. The tunnels are located south of the Dollarhide Trestle and north of the Town of Siskiyou. (The area above Tunnel was the living site for the Chinese crews constructing the tunnel.)

Exhibit Building was built in 1905 by the Ashland Board of Trade. The building was designed by Frank C. Clark the first year he lived in southern Oregon. The building was originally to be 12 feet wide and 20 feet long with a three foot roof projection all the way around. On May 29th the length was increased by 12 feet to accommodate additional displays. Since Ashland was a Division headquarters, trains stopped for approximately half an hour while engines and crews were rotated. Ashland was considered an ideal location to showcase local produce and materials for the large crowds flocking to the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland.

White Point Trestle was built between 1886 and 1887. It is 628 feet long and 60 feet high. It is located 1.3 miles west of the Siskiyou Station and at one time supported two sets of tracks. In 1900, concrete walls were built up around the trestle and carloads of dirt were brought in to fill between the walls. Filling was not completed until 1929.

Quilts and Genealogy?

Now, fascinating as all this is, just how does this quilt have any connection to genealogy? Well, this is what I consider to be the genealogist’s next step. After you have poked and prodded all the family members, census records and any other data you can locate, you have a pretty clear picture, maybe even some photographs, of your ancestors. But what do you know about their lives? The neighborhood where they lived? What did they see every day when they went to work, or shopping or to school? What color was the house they lived in? Who built it and when? Maybe that is all trivial information and it is definitely not needed to gain membership in the DAR. But wouldn’t it be interesting to know?

If your ancestor lived in the Ashland Railroad District, these quilt blocks represent some of the things they saw every day. Here, you can see the “Colonial Yellow” and chocolate brown colors used on the Depot Hotel. (Top row, center.) You can admire the swooping lines Frank Clark used when he drew the plans for the Exhibit Building. (Left side, third down.) Yes, if you dig around, you may find the photographs that show this same stuff, but how many are in color?

As you do your family research, remember to look for some of the less obvious resources. They may not have the “April 13, 1903” date you need, but they may tell you who your ancestors’ neighbors were, where the grocery store was located, or how your ancestor passed time each day.

A couple resources you might want to consider in order to learn more about that day-to-day life are the two *Table Rock Sentinel* articles. (Yes, I wrote the stories, but they still have good data!) “Growing Up in the Railroad District” was written in March 1988. “District Landladies” was written in March/April 1989. The information came from oral histories recorded in interviews with women who grew up in the District. Many local museums and genealogical and historical societies collect oral histories. While you might not find an interview with your relative, maybe there is one with a neighbor!

RAILROAD SLANG

Railroaders communicate in many ways. Switchmen and brakemen “talk” across the train yard with moving colored lanterns and flags. The engineer “talks” to other engineers and his wife at home with the notes of his whistle. The clicks and pauses that a telegraph operator hears “talk” to him of what is happening miles away. When railroaders get together the words they use almost seem like a foreign language.

Can you match the following railroad slang words with the correct definition?

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| 1. Beanery | A. Fast freight usually made up of merchandise, perishables or livestock |
| 2. Brain plate | B. Train drawn by two locomotives |
| 3. Clean the Clock | C. Locomotive Engineer |
| 4. Double-header | D. A railroad eating house |
| 5. Eagle eye | E. Twenty-minute stop allowed for a meal in a railroad restaurant |
| 6. Join the birds | F. Trainman’s badge attached to his hat or cap |
| 7. Manifest | G. Train orders printed or written on thin paper |
| 8. Peck | H. To make an emergency stop or to remove the pressure in the air lines so that the gauges show nothing |
| 9. Rattler | I. Passenger cars or train, dating from the time when passenger equipment was highly lacquered |
| 10. Shiner | J. A trainman’s lantern |
| 11. Tissue | K. To jump from a moving train when collision is imminent |
| 12. Varnish | L. A freight train |