

THE MANIFEST January 2015



The new year has begun and work continues on the track-laying project at the Park. It is hard to believe we only have two more months before we open again! I for one am looking forward to the new season.

TRACK LAYING CONTINUES PICTURES BY RICK AUBIN









**MONTHLY ARTICLE
BY LARRY MULLALY
PART 1 of 4**

This is a great article, due to its length, I am going to print this in parts. I estimate 4, but that is not carved in stone, may be less or more.

**Ashland's Historic Southern Pacific Freight House:
Past and Present**

In a quiet residential neighborhood of Ashland, hidden within a strange, barn-like structure are the mysterious remains of large Southern Pacific structure "Barricaded behind weather-beaten boards...is the city's first train depot," the January 2, 2015 issue of the *Portland Oregonian* reported. "Built in 1884...the structure's survival remained a secret until this summer, when the property was sold by representatives of the third generation of the family that lived inside it." It is a fascinating story. But is this in fact, the early 1884 depot? And if this is not the case, what then is this building? This study, with the help of information gathered on a January 22, 2015, visit to the site, addresses these questions.

1. THE OREGON & CALIFORNIA RAILROAD

The Oregon & California Railroad was incorporated in 1869, and within four years had built as far south as Roseburg. In 1881, under strong German managerial influence, the company resumed building southward reaching the southern Oregon town of Ashland three years later.¹ When the Oregon & California was merged with the Southern Pacific System in 1887, the company had operated independently nearly two decades. Under

¹ *Portland Morning Oregonian*, Dec. 7, 1871. The Ashland depot, described as "a handsome structure," when into service on Sunday, May 4, 1884. *Ashland Tidings*, May 2 and May 9, 1884.

the umbrella of the Southern Pacific [holding] Company, the O&C retained many of its original locomotives, rolling stock and much of its workforce. As late as 1900, the influence of the older O&C was evident when the decision was made to expand the Ashland Freight House. All of these elements play a part in the recently rediscovered Tolman Creek Road railroad structure . But the origins of this structure trace back to Ashland's original depot of 1884, and it is here the story begins.

The Original Ashland Depot
SOHS #5258



On May 5, 1884, the Oregon & California Railroad dedicated a combination passenger and freight depot in Ashland marking the southern end of its tracks in Oregon. A photograph (figure #1 below) taken on May 5, 1884 shows the building still in the final stage of construction.² The pipeline bringing water to the depot has yet to be laid, and scaffolding is visible at the south

² The photo is often incorrectly dated as 1887 when the final spike was driven joining California and Oregon. The incomplete nature of the construction argues for the 1883 date.

end of the structure. A US Railroad Commissioner Report dated January 2, 1887 describes the depot as 24' by 60' in size, the same size as depots previously built in Grants Pass and Medford.³ The Ashland depot remained a stage and wagon transfer point to California until tracks of the Southern Pacific System south reached the town in December 1887. Passenger activity was transferred to a nearby Railroad Hotel completed the following year, and for the next decade the depot was used as a freight house.

1. "Have you found yourself in the picture of the crowd assembled to receive the first passenger train in Ashland?", the editor of the Ashland Tidings wrote on May 9, 1884. The depot, with its distinctive Oregon & California eaves, featured a waiting room, office, and operator's bay at one end and a freight room on the other.

The design of the original Ashland depot can best be understood by examining photographs of the similar bi-level Medford depot erected during this same period that the Ashland depot was built. A distinctive feature of both structures is that the office and waiting room is at track ("ground") level, while the floor of the freight room is several feet higher. Typically a single upper window is found above the office area, while two upper windows at the opposite end of the structure bring light into the freight room. The overhead windows have been interpreted as evidence of an upstairs residence, although no stairway is shown in early floor plans.⁴

³ The bi-level Grants Pass, Medford, and Ashland depots were built in 1883-1884. The Central Point depot, of similar design, dates to 1888.

⁴ Henry E. Bender, Jr. writes: "The Grants Pass, Central Point, and Medford depots had one or two windows centered high in each gable end, probably for living quarters up under the rafters for the agent, making each a one and a half story depot." *Standard Pacific Lines Standard-Design Depots* (Signature Press, Wilton CA, 2013), pp. 199, 208.

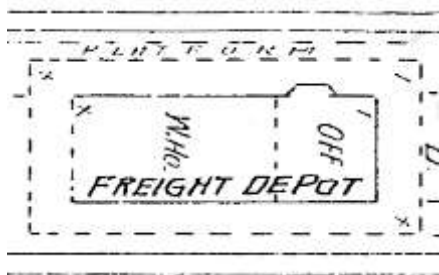


SOHS #910

2. *The Medford Depot, though reversed in orientation, is similar to that of Ashland.*

The ramp at rights leads to a freight platform.

The roof with its steep pitch and wide overhang is a distinctive feature of these structures. The disposition of the interior rooms of the depot appears in an 1898 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (figure #3) showing a bayed office area room approximately 24' wide x 20' long.

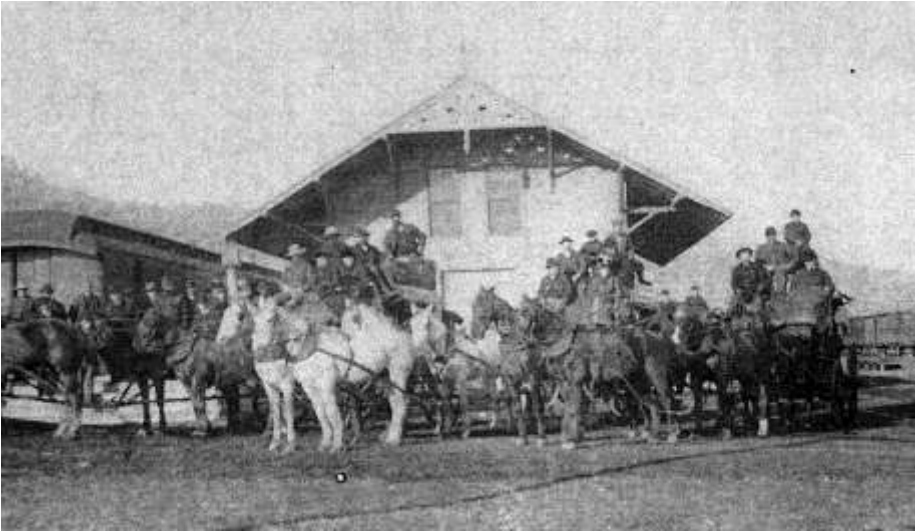


Physical evidence from the remains of the original Oregon & California depot in Woodville (Rogue River) shows that such structures were pre-fabricated, labeled, and

then shipped to the site for assembly. Apart from the distinction between larger bi-level depots (Grants Pass, Central Point, Medford, and Ashland) and smaller ones (Woodville, Gold Hill, Phoenix), the styling of O & C depots in Southern Oregon is remarkably uniform.

3. *An 1898 Sanborn Insurance map shows the Ashland freight depot with roof overhand indicated by dotted lines. The office and bay are at the north end of the structure and the numeral one indicates a 1-story structure.*

SOHS #34061



4. *The early Ashland Depot was a staging point for Northern California and the Klamath area. The upper windows at the south end of the freight house are the only source of light for the freight room of the original structure.*

To be continued next month.

MINUTES OF REGULAR/BOARD MEETING JANUARY 13, 2015

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The entertainment was a presentation by Larry Mulla, which took place prior to the meetings.

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 p.m.

- **New Business** New member Chris Carris was voted in.

No other business for regular membership meeting.

BOARD MEETING

The board meeting was called to order at 7:57 p.m.

- **Treasurer's Report** Jerry gave report, nothing new, Chris moved to accept report, Jerry Seconded.
- **Medco 4** Nothing new. However the fundraising was not met because we were short in donations from members, we needed at least 2 more.
- **Snack stand roof on hold until spring**
- **Butte Falls** Ric is going to try to go to a Town Council meeting in February to see if have solid support from the town.
- **Track Extension** Allen said it is coming along well and is going to have another work party on Saturday. I will post pictures in next newsletter.
- **Rick Aubin** said he put magazines in bundles, the bundles sold well at the show, will try selling that way during run season.
- **Construction** on the fire station may be delayed, so we may not have parking problem this run season. More info on that when available.
- **Busing** would be too expensive, as per what was discovered during Polar Express. Also, takes too long, people have to wait to get on to come to and from the park.

- **Internet** Going to try to get Dear Client: Wireless. Estimated \$99 hookup with free upgrade. We have a new router being donated.
- **Good of the Order** Ric said due to license requirements need to change insurance and registration/plates on truck. Ric was doing it, but it needs to go through SoRail.
- **Ric received** a message from someone in Wisconsin that wants to buy Diner. Will make that decision in February.
- **Telegraph** They are dissolving at the end of this year's run season. Need to find out if we can use the equipment to continue.
- **Larry Edwards** donated some magazines including old Craftsman from 1930's and Railroad magazine from '20's. There is a bond copy of Model Railroader that might sell on eBay.
- Jerry moved to adjourn
- E Don seconded.
- Meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

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UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

Our regular meeting is February 10, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
We will have election of officers, so please attend if possible.

Allen Dobney will be presenting "The Plausible History of the Footh Creek & Southern Railroad". The show will cover real history from 1910 to 1920 and plausible history from 1920 to 1957. You can look at the Allen's Foot's Creek website using this link:
<https://sites.google.com/site/adobney/home>

If you know of any other events that should be added to our newsletter, please email, (c-manley@charter.net), or call, (541-291-1705), with the details.

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