

heritage that Conover Square proudly preserves now houses over 30 specialty shops and restaurants.



*An Etnyre street flusher on north Third Street by the Schiller Piano Factory, now Conover Square.*

*In this space, now the City Hall parking lot, stood the original City Hall which was razed in 1920. Pike Dernier, who was City Clerk, had a broom factory on the second floor. These brooms were made from broom corn that was grown by farmers in this area.*

### **THE OLD CITY HALL BUILDING ON THIRD STREET**

***From Oregon Republican Reporter March 2, 1939***

Remember the old frame building on North Third Street which was for many years used as a city hall and hose room? Downstairs it housed City Clerk Pike Dernier's Rock River Broom factory. At one time Oregon boasted of three broom factories, but that was in the day before vacuum cleaners came into general use. Mr. Dernier was city clerk for many terms, and his office and factory was the gathering place for those in the city who liked to sit and discuss the problems of the day. Pike was a pretty staunch democrat, and in those days democrats were quite scarce in these parts. Nevertheless the local argufiers met daily and discussed rather heatedly at some length the Free Silver plan of William Jennings Bryan,



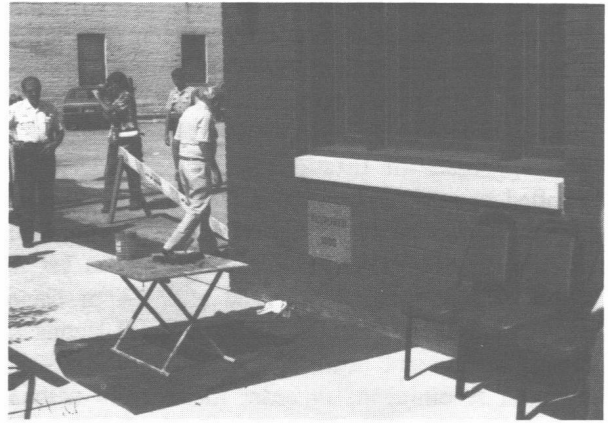
*Draying pianos from Schiller factory in the early 1900s. (Photo courtesy Republican Reporter)*

Spanish American war and the way old Admiral Dewey made hash out of the Spanish fleet. Many questions of great importance locally were settled in the old broom factory. Upstairs, on the second floor of the building was located the council chambers. The room was rather a dingy place, and some old fashioned desks and chairs made up the office furniture. To the north of the broom factory was what was known as the hose room, where two-wheeled carts upon which the fire-fighting hose was wound were kept. These were "engineered" to fires, either by hand, or by the prancing team of some passer-by. Our earlier recollections of Oregon in the nineties and also at the turn of the century were when Charles Schneider Sr., H. A. Smith, Jos. Sears and Dr. H. E. Wade were the mayors, and Ed. Welty, Mike Kelly, Charles L. Curtis, James Chasm, George Hettiger, Bert Fouch and W. L. Taylor and others were aldermen. That was long before the day of Commission form of Municipal government and mayors and aldermen were elected for a two-year term. Some pretty warm, wet and dry fights developed in those days, and if an alderman failed to build a sidewalk past the home of one of his constituents he was slated for a hot fight next election day. The city then had no road building equipment and the sprinkling wagon was sort of a large barrel mounted on a wagon. Water was spread through holes bored in a pipe at the rear. The city council proceedings were published each week so that the citizens might know how much was spent and what for, right on the dot. If the city tax rate went up one-half a mill there was a big squawk, little money was spent on roads or sidewalks, and the jail was a small frame building near the seat of government. In a tower at the back of the "city hall" hung a big bell which was rung when fire alarms were turned in. The old structure was finally torn down and a modern city hall building was erected. George Burlingame and George Reiman were police and for some years Will Stout and A. C. Foote were Supts. of Streets.

*The present City Hall was built in 1920 and remodeled in 1986.*



*Rededication of Oregon City Hall, placing the second corner stone. (Photo by Jim Kennedy)*



*Job done, stone in place—City Hall, 1986. (Photo by Jim Kennedy)*

*The building, the 22 feet next north (129 North Third Street), was owned by Al (Tiger) Liggett. He ran a second-hand store on the first floor and lived in the apartment upstairs. Tiger had a poker game going at times. He had the reputation of being one of the town's best. He also did some "Clamming in Rock River."*

*Where the new addition to the Church of God General Conference Building now stands (131 North Third Street) was the property and home of Nelse Jensen at the turn of the century.*

*City Hall, built in 1920, shared a building with the Oregon Fire Department and the Oregon Police Dept.*

*The Oregon Fire Dept is now in their new building on East Washington Street and the City Hall is shining under its new renovation completed in 1986. The new building shares its facilities with the police dept.*

*(See complete story and pictures in CITY section.)*

### **THE ADDRESS OF MAYOR JAMES V. GALE, FIRST MAYOR OF OREGON, TO THE CITY COUNCIL, MAY 10, 1870.**

Gentlemen of the City Council:

According to the provisions of Sec. 3 of Art. 4 of the City Charter, it becomes my duty as Mayor of the City of Oregon, to make to you such suggestions and recommendations as seem to me calculated to promote the prosperity of our new city.

Your first duty will be to ordain and publish such ordinances and regulations as are contemplated by the charter, and as will secure for us a simple economical city government.

The legislative powers of your body are somewhat extensive and cover a variety of subjects, but they need not all be exercised immediately.

It would seem to be the part of wisdom not to proceed too rashly, but only to adopt such ordinances as seem absolutely indispensable to the carrying on of the city government, and in this way, time and experience will indicate to you more clearly what further legislation is needed; and you will be better able to adapt it to our necessities and wants.

The power of taxation is limited by the charter to one-half of one percent, but it is not expected by our citizens that this provision should be construed to mean that this amount shall be levied, nor that it shall be regarded the minimum as well as the maximum.

The aggregate of taxation which our citizens are compelled to pay has become a serious burden, and it behooves us, the representatives of this new city government, not to exercise it unnecessarily. Let us set the example to those who may come after us, of having accomplished something substantial, without having resorted to burdensome taxation.

I would recommend, in order to do away with all jealousy, that whatever money is raised for the improvement of the city, should be expended equally in each ward, as far as practicable.

It is also necessary, among your first acts, to establish a grade of our streets, so that those who are about erecting buildings can conform to it.

It is understood, and is the fact, that the charter absolutely prohibits the sale of rum, gin, brandy, wine, whisky, or spirituous or mixed liquors, within the city limits, in less quantities than five gallons, except for mechanical or medicinal purposes; so that the City Council has been left no power to deal with the licensing for the retail of such liquors as a beverage.

The charter seems to contemplate that licensing shall be granted for the sale of ale and beer. You, gentlemen, are to fix the amount of the same, to such persons as you think proper.

A city like Oregon, whose attractive site was the admiration of the earliest settlers of the country, and for which nature has done so much for the encouragement of human enterprise—a city nestled in the midst of a most beautiful landscape, with the results of successful agriculture on every side, and one of the most beautiful rivers of the earth generously offering to become the strong right arm of her prosperity and power—can ask for nothing more save energy, enterprise and unity on the part of her citizens. With these, her future history must be all that the most ambitious among us can desire.

It will be my pleasure, as well as duty, to cooperate with you in putting into operation a good city government, and making it in all respects promotive of the interests and prosperity of the citizens.

From time to time, as experience and observation may become necessary, I may make such further or other suggestions and recommendations as may be deemed proper and beneficial.

JAMES V. GALE

#### ORDINANCE TO PURCHASE PROPERTY-LOT AND BUILDING FOR A HOSE ROOM

Sum of \$1000.00

Part of lot 2 in Block 34 commencing on the west line of said lot 2 at a point 22 feet North of the SW corner and thence east parallel with the South line of lot 80 feet-

thence North parallel with West line of said lot 22 feet thence West parallel with South line of said lot 80 feet to the West line to the beginning.

Passed July 9, 1883

*Another building that has two or more tenants by way of sharing a common wall.*

*On the left side, has been McDowell the blacksmith; Winklemerkur ice cream factory; Lester Grimes ice cream factory; and Jack McGuire Farm Implement. Bob Murdock used both halves of the structure with the laundromat on one side and his lunchcounter and pool hall on the other side. The Oregon Chamber of Commerce took up quarters here for a short while until the Yellow Bird Senior Citizen consignment shop came, followed by Loaves and Fishes, a catering service.*

*Journal of Proceedings of the City Council  
of the city of Rockford  
Council  
May 10<sup>th</sup> 1870*

*City Council met in accordance with call of the Mayor, at the office of the County Clerk*

*Present, Hon. James V. Gale Mayor;  
Absenmow Christian Lehman  
W. W. Bennett  
Geo. M. Doughty  
George P. Jacobs*

*On motion, Absenmow drew lots for the long and short terms, as provided in the charter, which resulted as follows:*

*1<sup>st</sup> Ward Long term George M. Doughty  
Short term George P. Jacobs  
2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Long term W. W. Bennett  
Short term Christian Lehman*

*His Honor, the Mayor, then addressed the Council as follows:*

*Gentlemen of the City Council:  
According to the provisions of Sec. 3 of Article 4 of the City Charter it becomes my duty as Mayor of the city of Oregon to make to you such suggestions and recommendations as seem to me calculated to promote the prosperity of our new city -*

*Your first duty will be to ordain and publish such ordinances and regulations as are contemplated by the Charter, and as will secure for us a simple economical City Government -*

*The legislative powers of your body are somewhat extensive and cover a variety of subjects, but they need not all be exercised immediately*

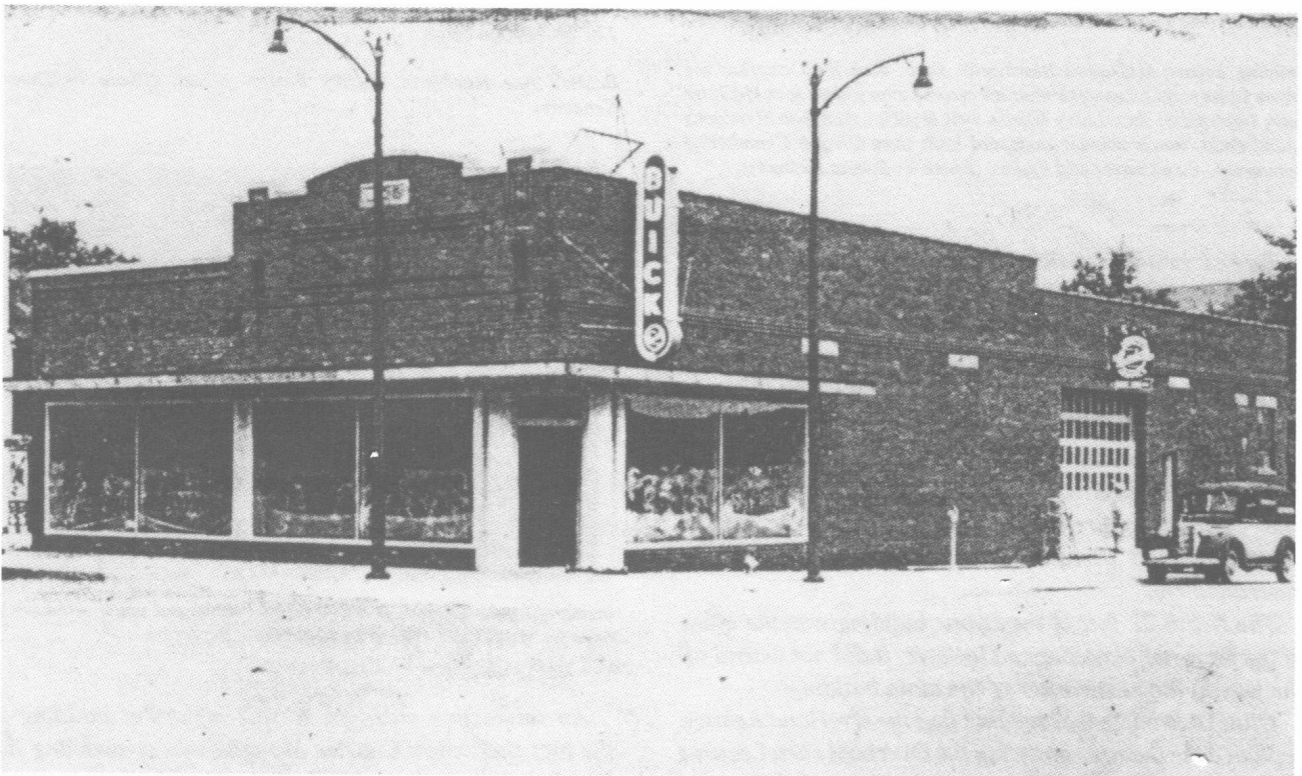
*Note the wrong! town is mentioned in the City Council Minutes of 1870.*





*100 block North Third Street, East side*

*This old picture shows the Lyon's Theater, the "Reporter", the tavern "Bucket of Blood", McDowel Blacksmith Shop; Old City Hall and Pike Derne's Broom Factory. (Photo courtesy of Republican Reporter)*



*On Route 64 at the corner of Third and Washington Streets*

*Picture taken from the Grand Opening ad for Whitney Buick Sales. The establishment opened Saturday, June 3, 1950. Coffee and cake was served and every lady was given a rose. The ad read: "We do repairing, washing cars, undercoating and handle genuine Buick parts and all auto accessories. It was Tim's fifty-fifth birthday. (Photo courtesy Charles Mongan)*



**APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING 1884**

For salaries of city officers	\$800.00
For building and repairing sidewalks	800.00
For General Fund for City Purposes	500.00
For contingent Fund	100.00
For Fire and Water Fund	
Payment on bonds	2000.00
Interest on bonds	800.00
Extension of water mains	1000.00
For wood	300.00
For engineer	200.00
For repair	100.00
For fireman poll tax	100.00
	4500.00
For payments of Judgements against city	1000.00
For library and reading room	100.00
For purchase of lot and building to be used as a hose room	1000.00
Total Appropriations	<u>\$8800.00</u>



113-115 North Third Street

*Building housed McDowell Blacksmith Shop; then Winklemerkur ice cream factory; then Lester Grimes ice cream factory; then Jack McGuire Farm Implement; then Larry Martin well drilling; then Bob Murdock's Laundromat, lunch counter and pool hall; then Oregon Chamber of Commerce; then Loaves and Fishes. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*

*Tucked in this small space have been some diverse businesses. Notable, T. O. Bowler, tombstone cutter, who displayed his handywork in the open space, and then an establishment known as the Bucket of Blood, a tavern. Louis Laskos also had a tavern here as did the Ligmans before the Ace Garden Store.*

*The Ace Hardware building, still sporting the lions head from its days as the Lyons Theatre, is one of the finer examples of architecture in town, complete with the tin ceiling and presenting stage as well as films for entertainment.*

*The North 22 feet of the Lyons building was the office of the Reporter Newspaper. However, it did not extend all the way to the east corner of the main building.*

*Clint Gearhart's Garage that had the Overland Agency, replaced the theatre, servicing the Overland cars. Lazarus Motor Sales came to Oregon and the automobile became a common sight on the streets. Whitney Buick Sales was the last of the car dealers in this building and the Gamble Store was moved here when the Sinnissippi Hotel was razed.*



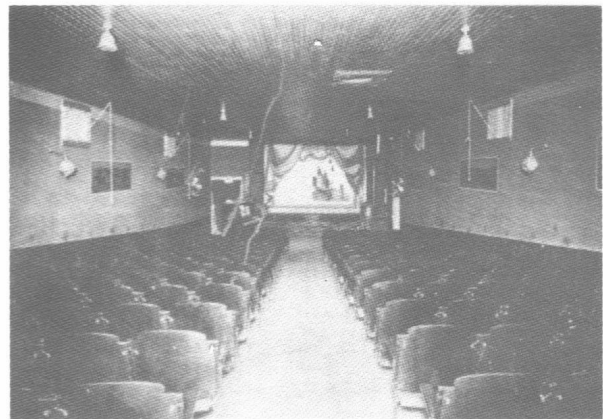
109 North Third Street

*Basler's Ace Hardware Garden Shop. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*



220 Washington Street

*Basler's Ace Hardware. Jeffery Basler—owner. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*



*Inside of Lyons Theatre. It had a metal ceiling and upper windows to open for ventilation. (Photo by Republican Reporter)*

*An interesting sidelight to this historical building is the fact that when Charles Mongan was remodeling the building for the Lazarus Garage, during the course of extending the north wall to the east end of the main building, it was discovered that N. E. Buser of Mt. Morris was the architect and that The Buser Concrete Construction Company was the builder.*



Northwest corner of Third Street and Washington

This picture shows the east side of Seibert's Grocery store and Sauer Tailor shop at the north end of the building. The front of Charles Curtis' studio can also be seen. (Photo courtesy of Republican Reporter)



During lunch break at Schiller Piano Factory. (Courtesy Richard Head) 'See picture of 302 Washington Street for interesting explanation of actual location.)



302 Washington Street (back entrance)

Many mistakes have been made by writers of history as to the time and location of certain phases of local happenings. This picture of a card game being played out-of-doors. The time? Turn of the century give or take a little. Some have written "During lunch break at the Schiller Piano Factory." The window in the picture is not like the windows in the Schiller Piano Building, but the windows and the large door are the same as those at the rear of the Burchell Drug Store building, operated and owned by the father of Francis Burchell (302 W. Washington St.). This group of card players (I knew most of these men when I was a boy and later) probably played in many different places both inside and out, but THIS picture HAD to be taken at 302 W. Washington St., NOT at Schiller Piano Factory. Submitted by Charles W. Mongan, Sr. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

Much of its history hidden under the vitrolite covering, this building shares a common wall with its neighbor on the north.

C. L. Curtis, photographer, was among the first to tenant this side; his building a frame structure typical of the time. Later the lot was bought by Mr. Franklin and Wernbled the blacksmith was moved here from 4th street.

In early days of Oregon, this was known as the Rock River Hotel, and it was said Lincoln slept here on his way to Rockford.

Now known as the Blackhawk Hotel.

A busy corner with the Fouch Feed Shed and then Chris Corcoran selling feed here. Abe Behr sold, traded, and bought hides and junk here, before a fire almost destroyed the whole block.

While the feed business was here, Sherm Landers practiced pole vaulting in the building, landing in the piles of feed bags, the high ceiling of the building offering an excellent place to practice in all kinds of weather.

In 1945 the sewing factory opened here in a new building to replace the one lost by fire.

Since the closing of the sewing factory, this has been the home of the Oregon Republican Reporter.



126 North Third Street

Harry Franklin bought this building after the fire at the junk yard and in 1944-45 built this building. First occupied by Oregon Manufacturing Co.; then it became the home of The Republican Reporter paper, which have moved their office to 400 North Fourth Street. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



126 North Third Street

Picture of fire at Abe Behr's Junk Yard. Formerly owned by Chris Corcoran's Livery Barn and Feed Shed. Other owners were Bert Fouch and Bert Marshall. Man in picture is Abe Behr. (Photo courtesy of Republican Reporter)

Been a lot of changes on this corner. Big fire almost wiped out the entire block.

Greenblats had a Texaco station and junk yard at this location.

Clifford and Bryson had a manufacturing plant here for a spell but they moved to the Nash factory building.

Ross Coe set up his welding shop until he moved out of town and the Spangler Brothers, Clyde and Walt, opened their plumbing and heating business here.

Harry Franklin operated a farm supply store next door. The Oregon Savings Center has been here for a while now and they have rented part of their space to Bonte Insurance.

A natural companion to a feed store is an implement store, such as the one, once located on the corner now occupied by Oregon Savings Center.

This is one of the businesses destroyed by fire, a common hazard in early Oregon as many of the buildings were constructed of wood.

Also located at this site have been Spangler Brothers Plumbing, and many others.



309 Franklin Street

Bonte Insurance. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



307 Franklin Street

This site housed Greenblats Texaco and Salvage yard; then Clifford and Bryson manufacturers; then Franklin Farm Store; then Spangler Bros. (Clyde and Walt) Plumbing; then Oregon Savings Center. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



Later Gecan was the blacksmith in residence, giving way to Jack McGuire and the farm implement business. Leo Irving Sheet Metal had a spot here also.

In more recent times, Sears opened a catalog agency here; later Oregon Home Appliance and Spectrum Printing.

Sharing the building on the north the tenants have been Messer Hatchery, Behan's Laundromat and Lauer's Second Hand Store. Later Ward's operated a catalog agency; now the site of a pet store, the Dog House.



116-118 North Third Street

Spectrum Printing and the Dog House—Judy Best owner. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



114 North Third Street

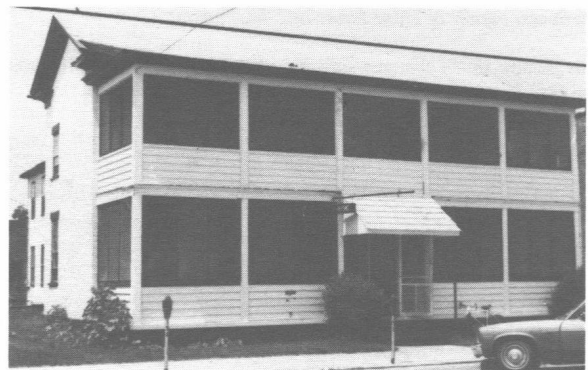
Charles Curtis Studio was located south of the Geiken building. The door had a frosted glass with a sailing ship etched on it. (Photo courtesy Republican Reporter)



120 North Third Street

Blackhawk Hotel

Pony belonged to Bert Marshall who owned the hotel. Later he had a horse-drawn bus from Sinnissippi Hotel to Depot and back—before taxis. (Photo courtesy Edith Fridley)

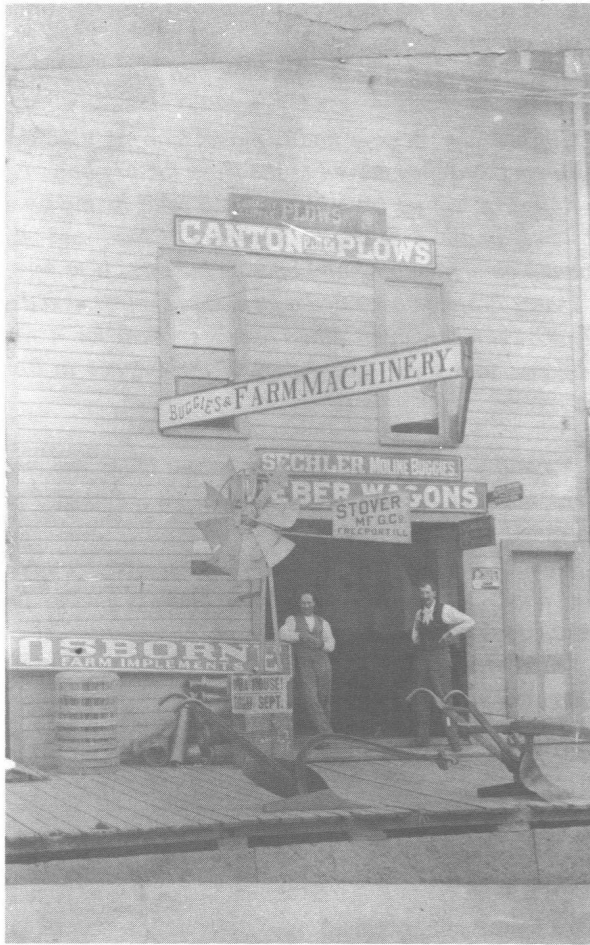


120 North Third Street

Rock River Hotel; then Blackhawk Hotel. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



Little four-year-old Salome Marshall (Marchant) on "Rocket" with Rock River House (now the Blackhawk), Oregon, in the background. The Rock River House was then run by Mr. and Mrs. John Brooke.



307 Franklin Street

Back in the days of lumber wagons and walking plows. If you ever used one you would know why the farmers were the strong men of that time. This building was located where the Oregon Savings and Loan is now.



200 North Third Street

Frank Schneider told me (C. Mongan) "the first house in Oregon to have carpeting on the floor, also that the owner's son was bit by a rattlesnake one Sunday afternoon when getting wood for the stove to make supper." Present location of Mitchell Home Center. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

This old building directly west of Conover Square has seen all kinds of business pass through its doors.



Leo "Hop" Colson and his employees in front of his garage on 3rd and Franklin St. Left to right: George Ulferts, James Colson, Kenneth Gearhart, Joseph Dvorak, Elmer (Teddy) Duhigg, Lorrel Bruce, Leo Colson. (Picture courtesy of John Remour)

Biddie McGee started with a woodworking shop here and soon it became a case factory, making cases for musical instruments.

Later Leo "Hop" Colson had his garage here and as a school bus driver furnished storage for some of the school buses. (Remember coming here to catch the bus to go to football games?)

It then was a bicycle shop for a short while and now is the location of Mitchell's Antiques.



302-304 Franklin Street

Gilbert Apartment Building. Left side (304 Franklin): West's Billiards—Dallas West. Right side (302 Franklin): Cheryl's Country Creations—Cheryl Point. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

This building was one story until Gilbert's neighbor added a floor to his building and to keep up with him, they added the second floor to this one and rented it out as apartments; known as Gilbert apartments. First floor was Seig Illinois Company for many years.



306 Franklin Street

Located here was Gilbert Hardware Co. warehouse; then William Beman Trucking office; then Brown's Boat and Trucking operation; then Dick's Pub. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

Gilbert Hardware Company used this building for storage and warehousing. Later Jim Brown had a boat shop here and then "Shorty" Myers had an auto repair shop.

Now it is Dick's Pub.

That's Jim White's Insurance Office over there at 203 North Fourth Street. He owned the house, and needed a space for his office after he decided not to run for another term as sheriff, and put this addition on the front of the house for his office. It worked pretty well for him, too.

There was a buggy shop on this corner, 201 North Fourth Street, but it burned, so Jim expanded the garage east where the buggy shop had been, as autos were becoming more popular. This was fast becoming a busy corner. Mr. White's son-in-law, Dick Fridley, took over the business later and operated a good service to the town for many years.

(The US 51 sign in front is used to denote a detour, apparently while a bridge was being repaired on old route 51.)



203 North Fourth Street

James White office; at the door James (Jim) White.



201 North Fourth Street

James White Garage; then Fridley Garage. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



201 North Fourth Street

Fridley Motors building at the right was Alpha Jones buggy shop which burned down. Later the garage building was expanded to cover the vacant area. Pictured are left to right: William Beaman-Bookkeeper, Ross Cline-Machinist, James White-owner of garage, Bill Starnes-gas station attendant, Lorrel Bruce-fender and body repair, Leo "Hop" Colson-shop foreman, Victor Jones-helper and night man, Frank B. White-mechanic and brother of Jim White. (Photo courtesy of Edith Fridley)



## FARRELL-HOLLAND FUNERAL HOME

*Provided by Neil Holland*

The Farrell-Holland Funeral Home has been serving this area for over 90 years. The building that presently houses this establishment at 110 South 7th Street in Oregon is a stately structure that dates back to the Daniel Etnyre family, who had it built to their specifications back in the 1870's when local citizens heralded it as the "Showplace" of Oregon. Today it provides a fitting setting for a long respected firm. Daniel A. Farrell (Dec. 16, 1837-Aug. 6, 1914) was the first in the family to provide a mortuary. The first location was upstairs in a building on Washington street north of the court house. Daniel's son Clark A. Farrell (Sept. 29, 1869-June 26, 1938) and Clark's son Lester G. Farrell (April 4, 1898-June 6, 1937) moved the business to 502 Franklin Street (now the White-Kaczmarzyk Agency).



*Neil Holland and son Larry. Clark Farrell portrait in the background. (Photo courtesy Neil Holland)*

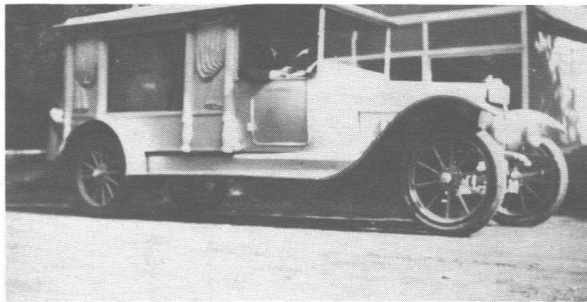


*110 South Seventh Street*

*William (Bill) Tremble on the left. Lester (Bud) Tremble on the right. (Photo courtesy Neil Holland)*



*Oregon's first funeral home built by Clark Farrell. (Photo courtesy Neil Holland)*



*Oregon's first motored hearse. (Photo courtesy Neil Holland)*

Lester Tremble (1917-1963), Daniel Farrell's great grandson was the next family member to assume responsibilities of the firm in 1939. Morris M. Roe became a partner in the firm March 1940 at which time they moved the funeral home to 202 N. 5th Street. Morris Roe conducted the business during WWII and left the firm in 1946. In 1952 William E. Tremble joined his brother Lester in partnership and the firm's present location was purchased from Burton Haas. This partnership continued until 1963 when the community was saddened by the untimely death of Lester Tremble.

Neil E. Holland the present owner became associated with the firm January 1967. On Jan. 1, 1972 a partnership was formed and continued until December 1979 when Wm. Tremble retired and Neil E. Holland assumed ownership and changed the name to Farrell-Holland Funeral Home. Larry N. Holland, son of Neil joined the firm in Feb. 1979 and assists with the operating of the funeral home in Oregon and their new funeral home in Byron which they opened December 1984. Thomas Gale son-in-law of Neil joined the firm in August 1985 and will assist in operating the business plus their newest funeral home in Stillman Valley which opened in August 1986.

Daniel A. Farrell	1837-1914
Clark A. Farrell	1869-1938
Lester G. Farrell	1898-1937
Lester A. Tremble	1917-1963
William E. Tremble	19 -
Neil E. Holland	1930-
Larry N. Holland	1955-
Thomas L. Gale	1963-

Rose Kyser lived in the house that stood on this corner (300 North Fourth) before it was torn down. Don Brooke and Dwight Mackay built an oil station here. It was Standard Oil when it closed, and quite a sight when they raised the underground tanks! Later there was a fast food place called Country School.

The next house was a small frame. . . front porch was right on ground level. . . belonged to George Schneider. He was a brother to Dr. Schneider.

Jenkins' lived next door, their son was a cleaner. The house was moved to 205 South Fifth Street.



204-206 North Fourth Street

Built in 1945 for McQuire Implement. This is now the Super Valu Market.



Jack and George McQuire in front of their implement concession at the Ogle County Fair.

The McGuire boys, Jack and George, have an implement business here. Repairs for the farmers when they need them and new equipment as well. Pretty important when you consider this is a farming community.

Mr. Harold Woodrick had a convenience store on the corner for awhile and then it was a donut shop, beauty shop, and now the White Pines Realty office and Blue Cross-Blue Shield Insurance are there.

That's the Catholic Church on the corner. The steeple can be seen for miles and is a landmark for many travelers.



210 North Fourth Street

Formerly Harold Woodrick Store; now White Pines Realty—Lawrence "Skeet" & Joyce Long and Blue Cross and Blue Shield Office. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

The telephone office is on this next corner, 210 North Fifth Street. They used to be on North 4th Street in the Goings building, 113 upstairs. People were hardier then, or so it seems, they had to walk up a long flight of steps to get to the office, but when they removed the house from this lot to Franklin Street, the telephone company decided this would be a good spot.

Lots of buildings in town have been used for other businesses than they now house. That residence, 202 North Fifth Street, was once the Farrell Funeral Home that was moved here from Franklin Street.

The present Farrell Funeral Home was moved from 202 North Fifth Street to 110 South Seventh Street.



110 South Seventh Street

Present home of Farrell-Holland Funeral Home—Neil Holland. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



202 North Fifth Street

Lester (Bud) Tremble (standing) and Morris Roe (in the car) in front of second funeral home. (Photo courtesy Neil Holland)



202 North Fifth Street

Second Funeral Home. (Photo courtesy Neil Holland)



**OBIT for Clark A. Farrell (1869-1938)** Death came to Clark A. Farrell well known Oregon mortician at St. Anthony's hospital in Rockford Sunday night at 9:50, where he had been removed a week previous for observation and treatment. He was born in Buchanan County, Iowa, September 29, 1869, the son of Daniel A. and Mary Farrell, among the earlier residents of Oregon. For over fifty years he had been engaged in the undertaking business and was known over a wide territory as an outstanding mortician. He was a graduate of the Worsham School of Embalming in Chicago.

He was married to Jeannina Allen Gibson in 1880, who passed from life in 1899, and on February 5, 1916 was married to Adah May Unangst who survives. Also surviving are two daughters, Mrs. William Tremble of Oregon and Mrs. Frank Marhofke of Berkeley, Calif., a brother John J. Farrell of Oregon, a sister, Mrs. Bert March of Homewood, Ill. and eight grandchildren. A son, Lester and a brother George preceded him in death.

Private funeral services were conducted from the late home on North Fifth Street Wednesday afternoon at two o'clock in charge of Rev. R. E. Chandler of the First Presbyterian church, Rev. A. R. Bickenbach, retired pastor of Presbyterian church, Rev. G. Eldred Marsh, pastor of the Church of God, and Rev. George B. Draper, pastor of the First Methodist church. Interment was made in Riverview cemetery.

In the passing of Clark Farrell, there are many in this community who have lost a true friend. He possessed a cheerful disposition, a kindly manner and did much to help others. In his chosen profession, he had but few equals in the state, and his consideration for those whom he came in contact with in the performance of his work was marked.

No man of our acquaintance possessed a more generous spirit than Clark Farrell. He was happy to be doing for others and enjoyed the friendship of a very large circle.

His passing at the close of a long period of failing health brings sorrow to hundreds of friends, who had hoped against hope that he might be spared to years of fellowship and service.

During the funeral services yesterday afternoon Oregon business houses were closed as a mark of respect to a long time resident, business man and friend.

**OBIT For Lester G. Farrell (1898-1937)**

Death came to Lester G. Farrell, well known Oregon mortician early Sunday evening, ill health and worry contributing largely towards it. A native of Oregon, born May 4, 1898, educated in the local schools, he grew to manhood in this city and assumed his place in the business life. Always a well met, likable fellow, he numbered his friends by the hundreds.

His death came as a shock to the residents of this community—to all appearances strong and healthy, keeping his condition of health of late to himself he apparently brooded over it more than was known.

In 1919 he graduated from the Wortham School in Chicago and took up work with his father Clark A. Farrell, well known local mortician. He was careful, painstaking, and agreeable, and from the start was successful in his chosen work.

No person will be missed more than Lester Farrell—his cheerful greeting, his willingness to help in time of need and distress, his kindness, all loom up in the final summary.

Surviving are his father, Clark A. Farrell and uncle John J. Farrell, a step-mother, two sons, Clark and Hugh, a sister Mrs. William Tremble all of Oregon, and a sister Mrs. Frank Marhofke of Gonzales, California.

The remains lay in state in the Farrell Chapel from Monday afternoon until this forenoon and private funeral services will be held from the chapel today at 2:30 P. M. in charge of Rev. Richard E. Chandler, pastor of the First Presbyterian church and Rev. J. E. Dale, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran church. Interment will be in Riverview cemetery.

It is hard at times to fathom out the great scheme of life; the untimely passing of those with whom we have been associated a lifetime.

We have known Lester Farrell ever since he was a small boy and we liked him, so also did everyone else. He possessed a makeup that drew friends to him.

And so, with the passing of this young man in the prime of life, we realize a great loss, to family, friends and community.



502 Franklin Street

*Oregon's First Funeral Home; then Rigs Products; then White-Kaczmarzyk Insurance. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*

*The original funeral home in Oregon has been the site of Rig Products and now the White-Kaczmarzyk Insurance Agency (502 Franklin).*

*Morrie Cann's Electric shop is on the corner at 200 North Fifth. His business has seen so many changes in the past years; from radio to television.*

Bemis Motor Company deals in Ford Motor Company products, including farm implements, automobiles and trucks. They provide sales and service of Ford and Mercury products and Ford farm implements. They feature a radiator repair shop and a front end and brake department.

Currently, they have 13 fulltime employees.

Harry Franklin states: "After 50 years of sales and service, Bemis Motor Company is still looking to the future, adding in the sales department a third generation of Franklins. John (J.) Franklin, a recent graduate of Carthage College, will join his grandfather and father in the firm."

*Next door south there was a livery and feed shed but memory fails me on the name. (Mix) Tom McCutcheon, the blacksmith set up shop here until the Starr Auto Agency took over.*

*Seems like the automobile replaced not only the means of transportation but some even changed their business to change with the times.*

*Lace and Mackay had an auto dealership here for awhile, sold Chevrolets if I recollect; and then Jim Brown's boat shop, but fire wiped him out; and Bemis bought the space for part of the garage.*

*The Sinnissippi Hotel, landmark of Oregon was built in 1847 and was home to many weary travelers passing through the town, either by horse, train and later by car or bus.*

*The Sinnissippi was owned by Matmiller and built by Mr. Emerson, a local contractor, using local brick and stone. The building was inherited by Dr. H. E. Wade, then passed to Rex Wade, Dr. Harry F. Wade and sister, Phyllis, and later purchased by Charles Mongan, local contractor.*

*The building was torn down in July, 1971 after the State Fire Marshall would not pass the building for occupancy.*

*The Sinnissippi echoed a time when life was a little slower. Shops appeared after 1914 and were shaded from the heat of the day by colorful awnings. Prior to that time the shops were a part of the hotel itself. The barber shop was located in the lobby so the customers could observe the comings and goings on the street while catching the latest gossip from the barber.*

*There was a room used for salesmen to show their samples to local merchants and to take orders for the next delivery or the following year.*

*The Sinnissippi was heated with stoves instead of a boiler, which gives an answer to the question of the number of chimneys. The building underwent remodeling at various times. The front entry was changed and larger windows were added, giving a view of the street. There was an addition on the north side that was later removed (possibly the storage for the kitchen?), and other remod-*



*Sinnissippi Hotel after fire escapes were added in the 1950s.*

*eling to accommodate the shops that were a part of the hotel.*

*The hotel restaurant was managed by many local people and patronized by the town for its atmosphere and good food.*

*Shortly after Mrs. Wade inherited the hotel, she had steel underpinnings installed to reinforce the floor and create space for more shops. This was sometime after 1914 and pictures can be dated from that time as awnings were installed to shade the shops from the sun.*

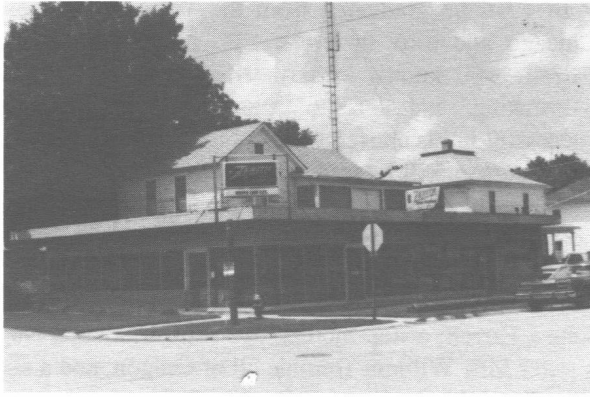
*The site is now occupied by an American Oil Station, formerly Roger & Warren's Standard Service.*

*On November 30, 1893, the Sinnissippi Hotel offered to its tenants and any weary traveler a Thanksgiving dinner menu that would satisfy even the hungriest.*

*Some who have occupied the spaces where the shops were located were Wallace Coffee Shop; Mrs. "Tug" Wilson Coffee Shop; Hettiger's; Curtis Coffee Shop (remember the hot beef sandwiches there); Hooks Flower Shop; Phyl's Flowers.*

*Located in the first shop area were Rush and Woodworth Barber shop; Woodworth Barber Shop; Mac's Barber shop; Dave Ashley Appliance.*

*In the third area were Otto Garard Variety; Ralph Leigh Variety; Gamble Store (Walter Sinkle); Paul's Gamble Store; Zumdahl's Gamble Store.*



200 North Fifth Street

Cann's TV and Repair Shop. The house part was the home of Clark Farrell. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

The cafe has been around a lot of years, too. At one time it was a "hang out" for all the kids in school from grade school to high. They'd come here after school, and from school functions like football games and dances for hamburgers and shakes. Mr. and Mrs. John Ring treated them like family, and if you didn't behave, they'd toss you out until you learned to behave! Mr. and Mrs. Clark served food for the "working man" here for a few years too.

Mrs. Clark sold plaster figures and showed how to paint and glaze them here when her husband got too sick to work in the restaurant.

This building grew from a little shop where Charles Ehmen started his plumbing and heating business. He outgrew his building and sold it to the Oregon Community Credit Union for their offices. There used to be a little gift shop in back, called "The Patio Shop," where you could buy the unusual and unique gift.

Before the time when people had freezers in their homes, this was the place to put up their meat and garden vegetables. Too bad the government had to put so many "Don'ts" in the business; it was a good service for those who didn't have freezers.



404 & 406 Franklin Street

Tom's Restaurant (406 Franklin) & Oregon Community Credit Union (404 Franklin). (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

Now let's cross over and follow the east side of Fourth Street.



121 North Fourth Street

South section of building was George Mix Livery; then McCutchens Blacksmith Shop; then Lace and Mackay Garage; then Brown's Boat Shop and Bemis Motor. This building was purchased by Bemis Motor after the boat shop burned. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



Part of workshop of Bemis Motor in the 1920s. (Photo courtesy of C. Hartsell)

Gus and Axel Wernblat had a blacksmith shop on this corner (southeast corner of Fourth and Franklin Street), until they moved over to Third Street where Curtis the photographer is and Jolly Heaston had a feed shed and livery. Then Mr. Mead and Mr. Fearer started a skating rink here but fire wiped them out.

Bemis-Franklin operated an automobile agency here and then it became Bemis Motors.

(From Thursday, June 24, 1971—The LIFE)

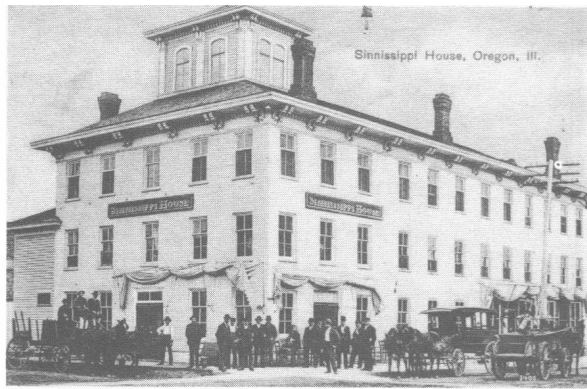
### Bemis Motor Company

Bemis Motor Company was established in 1919 by Dr. Bart B. Bemis, DDS, and Harry Franklin.

Located at the corner of North 4th Street and Franklin Street since 1920, the building burned in 1962, was rebuilt that year and expanded in 1966. In 1922, they opened an additional building, Bemis Motor Company of Byron, which they have owned and operated ever since.

John Franklin joined his father in 1946, and is now General Manager and principal owner.

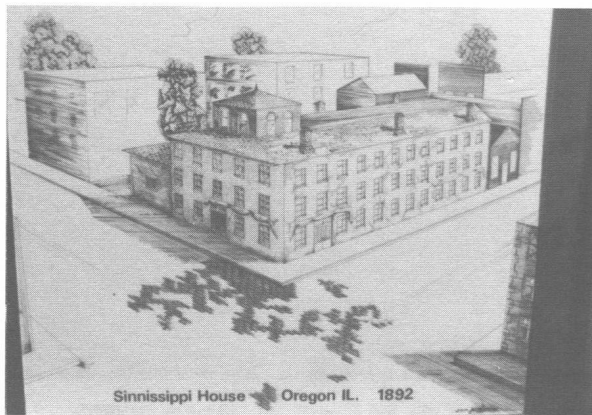




Built in 1847 by Henry A. Mix and Emerson. Picture in the 1890s. Notice first name—Sinnissippi House.



Sinnissippi Hotel



Sinnissippi House—Oregon, IL 1892 (Artist's conception—Jon Spoor)



Route 2 and Highway 64

This was the location of the Sinnissippi Hotel until the 1970s. Present location of Oregon Standard Service (Amoco). (Photo by Donna Kennedy)



Sinnissippi House before the turn of the century and name changed to Sinnissippi Hotel. Built in 1847. This picture is from 1890-1900—wagon in front was used to transport guests to depot. Heated with stoves instead of a boiler. Addition at left-hand corner was torn off later. Barber shop and variety store may have been under awnings at right-hand side of picture. (Photo courtesy of Republican Reporter)



*Sinnissippi Hotel, built in 1847. The contractor was Emerson—location Rt. 2 and Hwy. 64. It is now the location of Oregon Standard Service (Amoco).*



*Frank Cleary watches the demolition of the Sinnissippi Hotel. After three years of public opposition, including a court case that reached the Illinois Supreme Court, the wooden-frame structure built in 1847 came down to be replaced by a gas station (Standard). (Photo courtesy of Republican Reporter)*





312-314 Washington Street

This building was built for Francis Burchell in the late 1920s. First tenants were Doeden and Johnson Confectionery and Al Shep Boston Store. Present location of Travel Consultants and Bonnie's Decorating Center. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)

At one time there was a "sliver" building here, just a little narrow spot, but the Boston Store was here, operated by Mr. Shepp and then Sam Saletko.

Since then has been the Graham Jewelry, Mautz Paint and Bonnie's Paint and Wallpaper.

Ferd Ripplinger had a confectionery next door and then Murray and Lauver, Eyster and Ogle were in the building until it was destroyed by fire. Mr. Burchell rebuilt and Johnson's Confectionery moved here. Wendell Doeden bought him out and it was Doeden's Confectionery until he moved across the street. Boston Store then moved into this half of the building and after they closed the doors, Oregon Savings Center, George Fisher (attorney), and a Travel Agency have all been here.

Fire played a big part in shaping the downtown district of Oregon. As many of the early buildings were wood construction, fire was a constant danger and, without the



The Koontz Building was built in the vacant lot where the old Gilbert Hardware stood, after a November fire burned the Koontz Grocery Store on N. 4th St. This building had an eight lane bowling alley in the basement, a grocery store and Ben Franklin Store on the street level; Dr. Lloyd R. Woods office and five apartments above.



310 Washington Street

This is a picture of the Grand Opening of the Koontz Grocery and Meat Market in November 1940. Standing behind the meat counter are, left to right: Edward Buse, Charles C. Koontz, Eugene L. Myers, Clyde G. Koontz, Bernice Woodrick and Harold Woodrick. (Picture courtesy Viola Koontz Myers)

modern fire equipment we now have, the buildings had little chance of being saved.

For that part of the history, we can only name some of the businesses that were on East Washington Street in the vicinity of the Sinnissippi Hotel and east. To further add to the confusion, we have found the buildings were moved as quickly and maybe as easily as we move a car now since there were no utilities (water, sewer, electricity) to be moved. They simply put the building on logs and relocated it. Ah, that life could be so simple!

So if we have relocated some of the businesses, we have not done it intentionally, and we hope you will bear with us.

Replacing the buildings destroyed by fire is the Ben Franklin "five and dime" store. The Hawk Bowl bowling alley was in the basement until the fire in 1974. This block has been one of the hardest hit by fires. But we always seem to come back bigger and better every time; shows what kind of stock the people of Oregon are!

Next door was Clyde Koontz Grocery, later named the Royal Blue Store operated by Harper Koontz until taken over by Bill Fisher and Robert Ripplinger who worked in partnership until the store was closed.

At that time the temporary partition was removed and the entire first floor was occupied by the Ben Franklin Store until . . .

#### **Fire Destroys Oregon Businesses (Provided courtesy Charles Mongan)**

OREGON—About 5:45 p.m., Feb. 21, one of the major fires of Oregon history broke out in the Hawk Bowl, one of two businesses occupying the Koontz building in the 300 block of Washington Street. From the time the fire struck, Feb. 21, and after a battle that lasted well over 12 hours, both the bowling alley, the Ben Franklin store and apartments above it had been totally destroyed.





*A tragic fire which began in the Hawk Bowl, gutted the bowling alley, the Ben Franklin Store, and the second floor apartments.*

According to reports, the fire began when a pin became stuck in the automatic pinsetter on the seventh alley of the bowling establishment operated by William Friedrich Jr. Apparently, the stuck pin caused the motor to overheat and burst into flames. These in turn ignited the pins. Friedrich, and several bowlers who were using the lanes, tried to extinguish the fire with two hand fire-extinguishers. When this failed, Friedrich reportedly tried to throw the burning pins out of the pinsetter for others to extinguish. This in turn caused the heavily lacquered wood of the bowling alley to catch fire.

With the lacquer and the plastics burning, a heavy smoke quickly developed, forcing Friedrich and the patrons to leave the downstairs alley. The Oregon fire department, housed two and one-half blocks from the building, responded immediately to the call for help, but the smoke made it impossible for fire-fighters to get to the source of the fire downstairs.

Using chemical foam, the fire-fighters tried to smother the fire, but they were unsuccessful as the heavy acid smoke billowed up the stairwell and out into the street.

As the fire was getting going, apparently a gas meter was melted, causing the natural gas to flow unimpeded into the burning structure, feeding the flames. Spectators on the scene said that they heard an explosion, apparently caused by the gas coming into the building before it

caught fire. For the next three or four hours the fire-fighters were confronted with a blaze that was being fed by the flow of natural gas as workmen from the Northern Illinois Gas Co. dug to find the right gas main to turn off the gas.

#### **Call For Help**

Help was quickly summoned from surrounding departments with almost a half-score of neighboring communities furnishing either equipment, men, or both. The



*308-310 Washington Street*

*The Ben Franklin Store as it was rebuilt after the fire in February 1974. (Photo by Donna Kennedy)*

first to respond was Mt. Morris, followed by Byron. Others who came under the mutual aid agreement between the fire departments included Stillman Valley, Franklin Grove, Polo, Dixon rural, Ashton, and Milledgeville. A major help came close to mid-night when Dixon sent a snorkel truck that permitted fire-fighters to spray water directly into the source of the flames.

The fire quickly spread to the Ben Franklin store located directly above the bowling alley, and into the five apartments above the store. Fortunately the store and apartments were evacuated before any personal injuries could occur although John Mann was overcome with smoke after assisting one of the apartment residents to safety.

Mann was taken by the Oregon Ambulance Service to Dixon Public Hospital where he was treated and released.

A major concern of the fire-fighters was that the fire would spread to surrounding buildings, including a closed clothing store to the west and Offset Preparation Service, Inc., to the east. The latter structure housed highly sensitive typesetting and pre-printing preparation equipment valued in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Several computers were among this equipment.

#### Evacuates Equipment

As much as possible of this equipment was evacuated, much to the storehouse facilities of the Adamson Sears' Catalog Store on N. Third St.

Firemen, in the meantime, fought to contain the blaze within the single Koontz building structure. Special emphasis was given to soaking the west wall of the printing preparation building. Rooftops of both neighboring buildings were used as fire-fighting platforms.

About 10:30 or 11:00 p.m. the roof of the Koontz building collapsed, allowing much of the heat and fury of the fire to go upward instead of being contained within the building. With the gas turned off, and despite strong north-east winds, the fire-fighters began to win their battle after the collapse of the roof. With help from the Dixon snorkel truck as well as the contribution of the helping fire departments, the fire was gotten under control by the early hours of Feb. 22.

Street traffic, which was blocked at Fifth and Washington, Second and Washington, Jefferson and Fourth and Monroe and Fourth was again permitted to flow more normally after the fire was under control.

The fire continued to smolder and burn all throughout Feb. 22, and it was still smoldering on Feb. 23, as the fire-fighters maintained surveillance while letting the remainder of it burn itself out.

Estimated loss of building and contents approximates \$400,000 or more. Had the fire not been contained within the single building, however, the loss would have been much heavier.

The building itself was gutted, and the contents of the bowling alley, the Ben Franklin store, and the apartments were a total loss.

The Royal Blue Store, formerly known as the Koontz

Grocery was in the west half of this building. Offices and apartments were upstairs. The building was destroyed by fire in 1974 and rebuilt as Ben Franklin store.

*The Ben Franklin Store is presently operated by Jerald McLane.*

*In this portion of the building, Fanny Jones operated a Variety Store and next was Stan Jones Shoes, followed by Woods Bakery until the Kroger Store located here as one of the town's first "supermarkets" offering self service in 1940.*

*F. G. Jones building was the 1900's answer to our department stores. Mrs. Jennie Gradke is the milliner there—makes a mighty fine hat for the ladies.*

*Many years later the Kroger Company opened the first "supermarket"; self service yet! Here! They did business for many years and left a big void when they closed the doors.*

*That's the F. G. Jones building. Woods Bakery and the Fisher Food Store are there. It's a big part of our business district.*

*There are other places you can stay if you are looking; most are private residences; you can rent a room by the week or the month. I have a list here if you'd like to look at it.*

*The American House was later purchased by A. W. Spoor, and named Spoor Hotel.*

## HOSTELRIES OF OREGON

### HOTELS.

Mississippi House, A. W. Spoor, proprietor; 40 rooms, \$2.00 per day, \$5.50 to \$6.00 per week.

American House, Walter Carey, proprietor; 15 rooms, \$1.50 per day, \$4.00 per week.

### PRIVATE HOUSES.

NAME	RESIDENCE	Rooms.	Rates Per Week.
Mrs. Peck .....	Cor. 6th and Jefferson.....	6	\$6.00 and \$7.00
Mrs. Isaac Wing....	Cor. 6th and Jefferson.....	4	6.00 to 8.00
Mrs. C.F. Emerson, Sr.	5th, bt. Jefferson and Madison	12	5.00 and 6.00
Mrs. J. T. Gantz....	5th, bt. Jefferson and Madison	4	5.00 and 6.00
Mrs. Dr. E. S. Potter	3d and Adams .....	5	6.00 to 8.00
Mrs. K. Lampin....	3d, bt. Jefferson and Madison	7	5.00 and 6.00
Mrs. W. A. Washburn	3d, bt. Jefferson and Madison	3	6.00 and 7.00
Mrs. A. Knornschild.	Cor. 3d and Madison.....	3	7.00
Mrs. F. Wagner....	6th, north of Illinois.....	3	7.00
Mrs. L. M. Stroh....	Cor. 6th and Franklin....	3	6.00
Mrs. Thos. Morris....	6th, bt. Monroe and Jackson	3	6.00
Mrs. T. A. Jewett....	Cor. 6th and Jackson .....	3	6.00 and 7.00
Mrs. J. Etnyre....	Cor. 5th and Monroe.....	3	6.00
Mrs. E. Newcomer....	Cor. 4th and Monroe.....	4	6.00 and 7.00
Mrs. R. Prentiss....	Cor. 6th and Madison....	3	6.00
Mrs. Chas. Grassnick	4th, north of Illinois.....	3	7.00
Mrs. C. G. Bailey....	Cor. 4th and Illinois.....	5	5.00 to 7.00
Mrs. Johnston .....	Cor. 3d and Jackson .....	5	7.00

Special rates can be obtained for board by the month.