HANLEY FARM EVENTS

Enjoy hands-on activities and engaging programs. Tour the house and gardens. Take a wagon ride. Bring a picnic lunch.

SEPTEMBER 1
Old Fashioned Labor Day Holiday
Bring your family and friends and take advantage of reduced admission—only $1 per person, ages 6 and up! Old time Fiddlers will provide foot-stomping, hand-clapping tunes from noon to 3 p.m. Taste roasted corn.

SEPTEMBER 6, 7, & 8
Early 20th Century Farm Life
Members of the Early Days Gas Engine and Tractor Association and other tractor groups will display and demonstrate a wide variety of tractors and gas engines and provide tractor-pulled wagon tours of the farm Saturday and Sunday. Henry’s Ladies (Southern Oregon Model A Ford Car Club) visit the farm on Sunday from noon to 2 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 13, 14, & 15
Late 19th Century Farm Life—Harvest
Southern Oregon Draft Horse Association will demonstrate a turn-of-the-century hay baling press and provide horse-drawn wagon tours on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday, the Society will partner with the Southern Oregon Extension Service and J. Herbert Stone Nursery to present Celebrate the Harvest. Admission to the farm reduced to $1 per person, ages 6 and up, on this day only. Saturday’s activities include a threshing machine demonstration and rug-hooking by the Rogue Valley Rug Hookers. Miniature horse buddy and his owner talk horse sense for youngsters. The life of the frontier horse soldier will be featured on Saturday and Sunday as Klamath company “B” U.S. Cavalry re-enactors set up an encampment and perform drills. Saturday from 1 - 4 p.m., woodworking demonstrations; Sunday from 1 - 4 p.m., weaving and spinning.

SEPTEMBER 20, 21, & 22
Native American Lifeways
On Friday, from noon to 3 p.m., Takelma matriarch Agnes Baker Pilgrim will answer questions about the history of her people under the activity tent and as part of a lecture at 2 p.m. Tom Smith, cultural interpreter and member of the Southern Oregon Indian Center, will demonstrate traditional tool making and flintknapping Saturday and Sunday. Explore traditions and culture of the first peoples who lived here through hands-on activities.

HANLEY BARN & GARDEN LECTURE SERIES
Free with admission. Fridays, 2-3 p.m. Preregister by calling (541) 773-6536.

SEPTEMBER 6
Organic Farming: Past & Present
Robert McWilliams farms a 50-acre certified organic farm just a stone’s throw from Hanley Farm.

SEPTEMBER 13
Closets, Cupboards & Correspondence
Dark corners, hidden hallways, cramped cupboards and faded pages. Join us for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the historic Hanley house.

SEPTEMBER 20
Takelma History
Agnes Baker Pilgrim will talk about the history of her people, the Trail of Tears, and the importance of education.
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Cover detail of the "Official Guide to
the Lewis and Clark Centennial
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Southern Oregon Historical Society, 100 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501-5926
(541) 773-6536

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Southern Oregon Historical Society's primary mission is to provide historical collections, educational programs, and research resources to the public. Through its activities, the Society seeks to preserve Oregon's past and maintain the historical integrity of the region. The Society's mission is to collect, preserve, and present the history of Southern Oregon through its archives, exhibits, and programs. The Society is committed to providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of knowledge about Southern Oregon's past.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society is a nonprofit organization supported by membership dues, grants, and donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations. The Society's board of trustees is composed of volunteers who contribute their time and expertise to ensure the organization meets its mission.

The Southern Oregon Historical Society is located at 100 N. Central Ave., Medford, OR 97501-5926. For more information, visit the Society's website at www.southernoregonhistoricalsociety.org.
Current members of the Ashland Study Club gather for a group portrait in 2002. The women are heirs to a century-old tradition of study and fellowship that links them to a circle of women from Ashland’s past, such as those assembled below, circa 1914, apparently involved in a project related to Alice in Wonderland.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

This year, a group of twenty Ashland women formed a very serious study group that met once a week during the winter months to delve deeply into such diverse subjects as Russia, South America, drama, and the French language. These meetings weren’t tea parties. In fact, tea was considered a distraction and not allowed. The study of Russia, for instance, consumed twenty-seven meetings, each at least two hours long, and covered such areas as the primitive people of Russia, Russian folklore, pronunciation of Russian names, Ivan the Terrible, the House of Romanoff, Pushkin, and the Trans-Siberian Railway.¹

Why did these women dedicate themselves to such a task? Where did they get their materials? How long did the Ashland Study Club last?

The first question: Why? Perhaps relative isolation from the rest of the world encouraged these women to work hard at educating themselves. At any rate, folks in Ashland have long nurtured a fascination with the world outside this small valley. They signed on for the Chautauqua series of lectures and cultural programs in 1893.² The series generally ran for ten days in the summer and would certainly have whetted the appetites of hungry learners. The Ashland Library Association, formed in 1891, and, according to Katherine Ott, the Ashland Study Club provided sash curtains for the Ashland Library in 1902.³ Members have also long maintained a tradition of purchasing a book a year for the Ashland Public Library. Thank-you notes for their contributions go back to 1948 in the Southern Oregon Historical Society archives.

The second question: How did members obtain materials for study? In this era of the World Wide Web, books on tape, and DVDs, let alone huge bookstores, well-developed library systems, and so many magazines we can’t possibly read them all, it’s hard to imagine life before the information age.

In 1902, Ashland wasn’t totally cut off from the world, however. The railroad arrived from the north in 1884, connecting the valley to Portland and ultimately New York, and in 1887 the first train from the south connected in Ashland to form a north-south line.⁴ Before that, precious books, letters, and newspapers were shipped around the Horn of South America or across the Isthmus of Panama to reach the information-hungry settlers in the Rogue Valley. Books then were treasures to be shared and cared for. Jessie Osgood, who joined the Ashland Study Club in 1961, tells of “mining” her father’s library of books on Scotland for her presentations to the group.

Jessie also answers the third question because she still attends meetings of this group, which has met consistently for the whole one hundred years! What has held this group together so long? Jessie and other long-time members talk of warm, enduring (forty- to fifty-year) friendships, of the exciting things they have learned, and of the strong but not totally inflexible structure of the group, which offers membership by invitation only.

In this more hectic era, the women meet every other week and focus on individual presentations rather than all-inclusive study sessions. Also, tea and goodies to eat are allowed now, even expected. Tea is a time for chat to nurture those friendships, but after thirty minutes a bell is rung and members return to their seats for the second presentation of the afternoon, perhaps a survey of Asian games including Mah Jong or a history of jade, the stone of heaven, or a look at the lives of women in the time of Jane Austen.⁵

Sheila Straus is a writer and artist living in Ashland.

ENDNOTES
4. O’Hara, Ashland, p. 27.