

# Ashland

MAGAZINE

Gateway to Southern Oregon

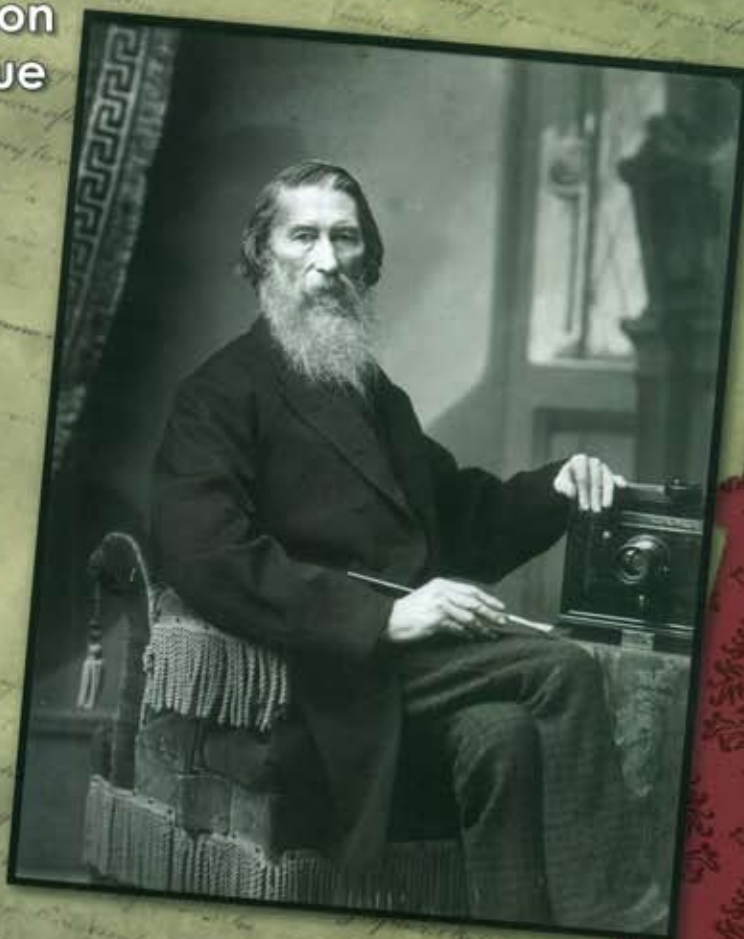
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August 2009

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Mark Antony Hotel, Ashland, early 1960's. Terry Skibby photo.



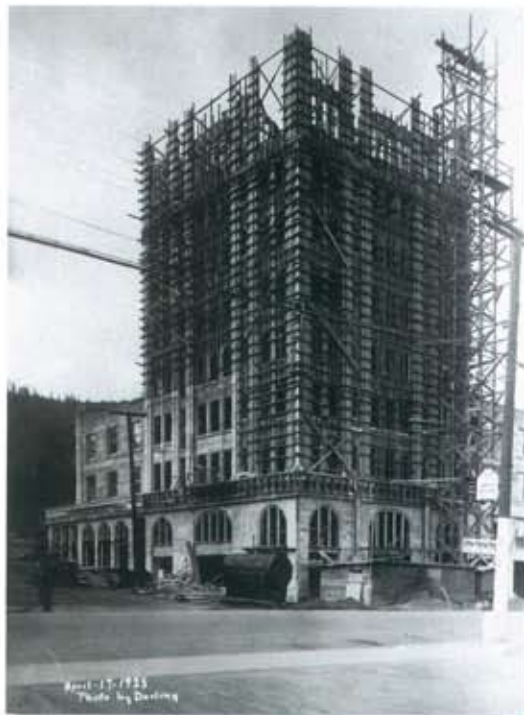
*Parade on East Main Street, Ashland, circa 1910. Columbia Hotel in the background. Terry Skibby photo.*

## Historic Hotels

*By David Evans*

I went to Ashland one lovely spring day to write a short vignette about three grand old hotels: The Columbia, the Peerless and the Ashland Springs. The sun peeking through the clouds made the intermittent raindrops sparkle and the citizenry, from hipsters, healthsters, shopkeepers and artists to tourists from Toledo, were bustling up and down the boulevard.

As I walked up the long stairway to the Columbia Hotel, my first stop, I felt as if I was entering another era. This charming hotel, with its tastefully quaint rooms, is laid out in the old European style, with bath facilities at the end of each hall. Originally, it was a boarding house



*Ashland Springs Hotel under construction, Ashland, April, 17, 1925. Terry Skibby photo.*

built in 1910 and the lobby served as thriving dance hall. I imagined men in straw hats and women with feathered headbands waiting for their turn to do the Charleston. Today, the skylighted lobby is a place where loyal clientele socialize with newfound friends. The legendary friendliness of Welshman Owen Jones, owner of 28 years, makes everyone feel at home.

Crissy Barnett, owner of the Peerless Hotel, my next stop, took another old boarding house built in 1900 and from 1991 to 1994 lovingly transformed it into one of Ashland's finest places to stay. Ashland was a hub of rail travel in Southern Oregon from 1900 through the late 1920's and the old "Peerless Rooms" housed workers from the Southern Pacific





*Peerless Hotel, 4th St. Ashland, circa 1970. Terry Skibby photo.*



*Ashland, East Main, Columbia Hotel and Ashland Springs Hotel in distance, late 1920's. Terry Skibby photo.*



Railroad. Crissy took me on a magical tour through the elegantly remodeled structure and its unique and luxurious antique-filled rooms. The artistry and craftsmanship that have gone into transforming this once "dangerous old building" into a remarkable first class hotel, named one of the Best Places to Kiss in the Northwest, is truly stunning.

My last stop was a visit to the magnificent Ashland Springs. It first opened in 1925 and was extensively remodeled in early 2000. I was captivated by the passionate creativity reflected

in the elegant gardens, courtyards, furnishings and the many artistic expressions of the region that have gone into realizing a vision that owners Becky and Doug Neuman call the "Essence of Oregon." Becky tells me, "In the twenties it was all about the Lithia waters and their curative powers. People would camp along the creek and attend the Chautauqua lectures in the Beehive Dome." The spirit of health and enlightenment still lives in Ashland and is reflected in the ever-unfolding vision of the Ashland Springs Hotel. ■

*For more information please call, or visit the websites below and be sure to tell them you read about them in Ashland Magazine!*

*Columbia Hotel*  
Ashland  
[www.columbiahotel.com](http://www.columbiahotel.com)  
(541) 482-3726 or  
(800) 718-2530

*Peerless Hotel*  
Ashland  
[www.peerlesshotel.com](http://www.peerlesshotel.com)  
(541) 488-1082 or  
(800) 460-8758

*Ashland Springs Hotel*  
Ashland  
[www.ashlandsspringshotel.com](http://www.ashlandsspringshotel.com)  
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