



THE BOOK OF OREGON



THE OREGON THESPIAN

BY WHICH WE MEAN SOMEONE WHO SEES NO REASON WHY A DECREPIT OLD CHAUTAUQUA STAGE OUT IN THE DEEP WOODS OF OREGON CAN'T BE TURNED INTO A SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL THAT IS SO FANTASTIC—WE SEE NO REASON TO BE COY ABOUT IT—THAT PEOPLE COME FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD TO TAKE PART.

Many years ago in a land we call Ashland, Oregon, there lived a gathering place. It was an old, run-down stage in the middle of the woods that hadn't been used in even many more years—or it was, anyway, until a man spied it and saw something much different. The man didn't see a decrepit old stage but a place of enchantment. Surrounded by the violent rivers and gentle hills of southwestern Oregon, there wasn't a need for fancy sets or elaborate costumes. In fact, there was something so captivating about the place that he envisioned people coming all the way to Oregon and living the theater for a week at a time. And they came. The serious theater-goers and the not so serious theater-goers. Actors and actresses from places too far off to mention. The little stage turned into three. Two shows turned into eleven. The man began to understand that what he had really seen was a new way to experience the theater. Not the after-dinner-and-before-bed type, but something more akin to a pilgrimage. Where people make the journey because, unlike any other theater they've been to before, they aren't simply taking in a performance, but playing an important part.

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