

Bygone Times

A Newsletter of The Troutdale Historical Society.



APRIL, 1987

EDITOR: Sharon Nesbit, 665-0423

RUBY STATEN: FORTY YEARS ON THE RIVER...

We will feature Ruby Staten in a live interview at the Troutdale Historical Society meeting at 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 20 in Troutdale City Hall. Ruby and her late husband, Elliott, lived for 40 years in the little white gas station/house that sits at the west end of the Troutdale bridge. They managed cottages there, ran and small store and, in the 1948 flood, canoed in and out of the place calling it "Staten Island." Ruby's stories which will be taped for our oral history collection.

Refreshments will be served by Nancy Cox and Sue Davis.

LIKE THE SAY IN THE ARMY, DID YOU RE-UP?...

Membership secretary Lois Schulte reports that our drive to sign up new members is going splendidly with 50 new members in our ranks. The problem is that our old members are not keeping the pace and are causing us to lag behind in our race to count 500 members.

The little guy climbing the ladder at right indicates that we have yet to get our foot on the first rung. You can help by sending your dues of \$3 a person to Lois Schulte, 17655 SE Bluff Road #1, Sandy, Ore. 97055.

New members who have joined recently are: Corra Starks, Ethel Spera, Dorothy Kerslake, Lola Lumsden, Lynn Leahy, Valora Jones, Neal Otto, Michael Hamme, Doug Zimmerman, Diana Reynolds, Donna Burlingame, Shirley Yost and Anne Walker.

PUTTERER WANTED...

The Harlow House could use a first-class putterer, someone who would drop by once a week or so to see that little things are done, a window puttied, a screen fixed, a gutter cleaned. If you would like a job as Harlow House putterer give us a call. The pay is non-existent but the thanks will be plentiful.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?...

We like to hem and haw and scuff our feet a little before we give new members a job, but if you want to leap right in, we have a job for you.

Doris Caramella, telephone 253-7010, is at work lining up museum hosts to work in the Rail Depot Museum on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from 1 to 4 p.m. May through September.

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DEPOT HOSTS, CONTINUED...

Opening the museum two days each week is part of our commitment to Troutdale by drawing more tourists to the town. To do this we are asking each museum host who gave one day last year to sign up for two days this year.

The work is easy and mainly involves being hospitable. Most people worry that they don't know enough to be museum hosts, but we find that the major qualification for a museum host is to be a good listener because visitors like to talk about their own railroad experiences.

IN MEMORY...

Josephine Helming Jackson, 90, the daughter of early Troutdale saloon keeper Louie Helming, died recently in Portland. Her daughter, Phyllis Balesteri is here from Monterey, Calif., and will be staying a while to settle up her affairs. She can be reached at 705 N.E. Holman, Portland, 97211, telephone 288-3523.

Josephine visited our society several times and told fascinating accounts of early-day Troutdale. Many of the historic photos from her collection are in our files.

PLANT SALE COMING UP...

In addition to tending the yard at the Harlow House, Cathy Hamme is in charge of our annual plant sale at the ice cream social June 7.

If you have plants coming up that you would like to separate and share, give her a call and she will come dig them. Her number is 667-7760.

HOME TOUR NOTES...

We have added another house to our May 17 home tour. Tom Tate, of Faith United Methodist Church, and Terry Barker-Tate agreed to sign up their home, the former William Elmer House on Stark Street, for the home tour.

Expect to receive a brochure in your May newsletter. However, if you know of someone who should receive one before that contact Sharon Nesbit and she will send them.

Incidentally, we will be looking for cookie bakers to supply the goodies for the tea we plan to serve at the Harlow House. If you can help, let us know.

WE GET MAIL...

MARIE COWLES writes from Sacramento to renew her membership and reminisce about her aunt and uncle, Morris and Gladys McGinnis....member BILL FERGUSON renewed his membership once again. He likes to flash his Troutdale Historical Society card when people ask him for identification...HAROLD AND MYRTA WEATHERHEAD write from Oregon City that their mother CORRA STARKS still lives in her own home in Sioux Falls, S.D., and will soon be 100. Corra, who grew up in Troutdale, wrote her memoirs in 1969. An excerpt follows on the next page.

FAIRVIEW, WILKES, ROCKWOOD START HISTORICAL SOCIETY...

Residents of Fairview, Wilkes and Rockwood who are interested in starting a historical society in that area are invited to attend a first meeting and historic picture show and tell on Monday evening, April 6, at 7:30 p.m. in Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church on Fairview Avenue in Fairview.

EARLY CHILDHOOD AT TROUTDALE OREGON
BY CORRA SYMES STARKS
Written August, 1969

My parents moved to Troutdale from Nebraska early in 1889 when I was little more than a year old...My father, Herman E. Symes, was company ranch foreman for the original meat company located on the land which has since become known as the old Sun Dial Ranch.

(Symes worked for the American Dressed Meat Company. The Sun Dial Ranch was a huge ranching operation that extended along many thousands of acres from the Sandy River past Fairview. Both the Reynolds Metals plant and the Troutdale airport are located on the old ranch.)

We lived in the company ranch house...Mama cooked for about 30 company men but I remember only one whose name was Duffy. I always said "Guffy." Mama had a Chinese cook to help her and I remember her making so many pies. I have forgotten the cook's name but he was excellent help and very trustworthy. He made regular trips 16 miles to Portland with the team and buckboard but one day he took the team to the livery barn in Portland and told them to take off the harness, curry and feed them and he would be back after he got his groceries. He ordered \$30 worth of groceries and paid for them with his own money and started back after his team and that was the last anyone ever saw of him. Everyone who knew him felt sure he was shanghaied...

I had two pet sheep at the ranch, they were orphans, and they would follow me up all those steps in the woodshed to where the pears were put to ripen. When papa realized how good they were at going up the stairs he trained them to lead sheep up the steps at the slaughter house and then turn and run back another way while the others went on in...

My brother, Charlie, was born in the ranch house Jan. 21, 1890, and I think it was the next winter that papa's windpipe cracked from breathing in so much cold while riding so he had to quit and we moved into town (Troutdale) where he bought the livery stable on Main Street.

...I remember sitting in the east windows (of a house on Troutdale's hill) and watching the distillery burn...seeing those barrels exploding so blue and flying so high up into the sky. I don't remember what time it started but papa stayed with the other men most of the night to keep the fire from spreading to the packing house. The distillery and the packing house were both built before we moved to Troutdale and were the mainstay of support for the town. I believe the distillery burned in 1894 or early in 1895.

I started to school in Troutdale when I was five....that was the fall of 1892 and I think it was a new schoolhouse at the time...Indian John's grand-daughter Mary was in school at the same time, she was a little younger than Aunt Pearl and Grandma used to give her the clothes Aunt Pearl outgrew.

...The new bridge was built while we lived there, it was sabotaged and crashed into the river during the night wakening everyone in Troutdale. They discovered the trestle had been sawed but they were able to pull the bridge back up.

...In the fall of 1895 we moved from Troutdale to a farm along the river near Eugene.

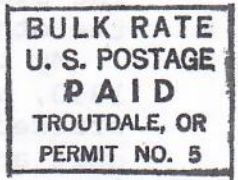
...I was so thrilled to walk down main street in Troutdale again in September, 1968, and see things I remembered all through

WRITE IT DOWN...

Memoirs like those on the last page from Corra Starks are real treasures in our collections of Troutdale history. If you have a story to tell, take a few minutes and write it down. Don't be fancy about it, just write it. We'll type it for you and make it a permanent part of our historical files.

NAMEDROPPERS...HERB NASMYTH is still taking orders for permanent name tags. Call Herb at 774-7525 if you want one. And, he reminds, if you haven't collected yours yet, pick it up at the April 20 meeting...We received a nice donation and wonderful letters from the Cub Scout den led by PATTY CAPPS following their tour of the Harlow House...New member ELSE LARSON brought several friends and co-workers from the Albertina Kerr Center for Children to the Harlow House. She is a retired librarian from Glenfair school and promises to work over our library for us...CAMILLE CRUMB gave us a White Owl cigar box...STEVE KENNEY found an 1893 post card advertising bulbs, roses and trees from Posson's Seed Store, Portland, which claimed a factory at Troutdale...VICKIE NESBIT designed and prepared our home tour brochure...CAROLYN STRONG, a new member, will prepare our home tour map...BILL NESBIT has agreed to be bingo chairman and RANKIN DAVIS, TED SCHULTE, CATHY HAMME, NANCY & SAM COX, KEN & JOYCE PRICKETT, BOB & SHERRY JACOBS, SALLY & BARRY ARMSTRONG, BOB MITCHOFF AND SHARON NESBIT are all regular volunteers at the game which takes place at 7 p.m. every Thursday in the city park building. Their efforts are finally beginning to pay off as bingo has made a profit in recent weeks.

TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
104 SE Kibling
Troutdale, Ore. 97060



Nesbit, Bill, Sharon & Family
623 Buxton
Troutdale, Ore. 97060

REMEMBER TO REENLIST...THE TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WANTS YOU!

INSIDE: CORRA STARKS REMEMBERS THE NIGHT THEY SABOTAGED THE TROUTDALE BRIDGE.