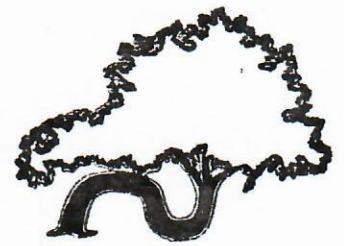


# Bygone Times

A Newsletter of The Troutdale Historical Society.



JUNE, 1989

EDITOR: Sharon Nesbit, 665-0423

## IT'S THE CAT'S PAJAMAS...

THE BIG NEWS about this year's old-fashioned ice cream social from noon to 5 on Sunday, June 11, at Troutdale City Park is that we have hired a band. A group of professional musicians, The Swipsey Cakewalk Ragtime Band, will play from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. The band is possible through a partial grant from Local 99, American Federation of Musicians, Music Performance Trust Fund. And through the efforts of board member Gene Bui who made the arrangements.

There will, of course, be the usual wonderful ice cream treats -- fresh strawberry sundaes (also chocolate and pineapple), Sam Cox's famous gut-busting banana split, home-baked goodies at the Country Store, a spectacular display of antique tools from Corbett resident George Rowley, gorgeous summer flowers and Cathy Hamme's world-class plant sale. We will raffle off an afghan and, in general, celebrate the beginning of summer.

What can you do? Well, here's a list:

1. Keep your newsletter for a handy reference and post the enclosed flier someplace in your neighborhood.
2. Divide some of your garden plants or bring houseplants for our plant sale. You can bring them to the park at 1 p.m. Saturday, June 10, or on Sunday. Saturday is better.
3. Pick us some flowers for our table bouquets and bring them to the park at 1 p.m., Saturday.
4. Bring your favorite knife, a colander, or a berry cleaning tool and help us clean berries at 1 p.m., Saturday.
5. Bake a cake or cookies and bring it Saturday or Sunday for sale in our country store.
6. Give an hour of your time. We need servers, punch-pourers, sundae makers, banana slicers, table cleaners, etc. Volunteer an hour of your time by calling Nancy Cox, 665-9086.

## ROLLING ON THE RIVER...

Saturday, July 29, will be our trip on the Columbia River Gorge sternwheeler. The tour, led by Gene Bui, includes transportation to Cascade Locks, the boat ride and a meal. For more information, and to make a reservation, call Gene at 667-3231.

## SADIE RILEY WINS AWARD...

Member Sadie Riley won our Member of the Year award at our May 15 potluck dinner. Sadie is one of those people who pitches in without asking. You may know her as the creator of our endless supply of punch. Three events back we asked her to make the punch and, like the proverbial bottomless well, punch has been appearing ever since.

Sadie is a forklift operator at Owens-Illinois. She is also a motorcycle rider. On one day, in particular, we did not have enough garbage cans for the Harlow House pie social. She slapped on her "brain bucket" (for the uninitiated that is motorcycle talk for helmet) and took off. Five minutes later she was back carrying a garbage can on her motorcycle.

TALES OF THE SUN DIAL RANCH...

Grandchildren of C.F. Swigert, one of the founders of the Sun Dial Ranch, attended our May 15 meeting to tell us about their family's connection with the vast ranch, which stretched along the Columbia River lowlands from the Sandy River to Fairview.

Bill Swigert prepared a number of documents for our files and told how H.C. Campbell, C.F. Swigert and E.G. McGaw acquired 1,825 acres in 1905. Swigert and Campbell had previously used the delta between the big and little Sandy rivers for a gravel mining operation. It was at the gravel-mining site, Bill Swigert said, that H.C. Campbell frequently retrieved Indian artifacts.

In 1918 McGaw and Campbell formed the Sandy Drainage district. Following some draining and dyke work, the farm was used to grow celery, potatoes, cabbage, onions, cauliflower, lettuce, berries and peaches.

In 1923, H.C. Campbell decided that the automobile was doomed to fail. It caused too much pollution and frightened animals, he reasoned. So he began an ill-fated program of breeding Belgian and Percheron draft horses to fill the gap.

Campbell died in September of 1927. The same year a fire destroyed his house at the ranch including a large collection of silver, rugs and paintings. Campbell was said to have an impressive group of paintings from Northwest artists and, it was rumored, a Cezanne or two that he had picked up in France. His rug collection was many inches deep on the floors of the ranch house and his silver collection awed women acquaintances. All of it, as well as the Indian artifacts he gathered through the years, was consumed in the fire.

The ranch fell on hard times in the 1930s. Due to a previous \$100,000 bond sale, C.F. Swigert foreclosed on the ranch in 1930 and bought it at a sheriff's foreclosure sale for \$43.42 an acre. The ranch went into bankruptcy in 1932. Gradually pieces of the property were sold off. After Swigert's death in 1935, the last of it went into his estate and was eventually sold by his heirs.

C.F. Swigert's other ventures into business were much more successful. He founded Oregon's ESCO corporation and his son founded Hyster.

The guests at our May 15 meeting, Bill, Ernie and Henry Swigert, are all grandchildren of C.F. Swigert. Another grandchild, Nani Warren, who was originally scheduled to speak, could not be there because she was out of town.

The best joke of the evening was a statement in a prospectus on Sun Dial Ranch written in 1922 for the bond sale: "From a study of government records, the climate (at the Sun Dial Ranch) is characterized as mild, bright summers with an absence of high winds and destructive storms."

COME WALK WITH US...

In order to kick off the summer opening of the Harlow House and acquaint new members with the history of Troutdale, historian Sharon Nesbit will lead a walking tour of Troutdale beginning at 3 p.m., Saturday, June 17, at the Harlow House, 726 E. Historic Columbia River Highway.

The tour is free. We will talk about the Harlow House and then walk to downtown Troutdale and back, a total of about 10 blocks of easy walking. We'll have lemonade and questions and answers when we get back to the Harlow House.

ABOUT OUR MUSEUMS...

The rail depot museum is open each Saturday and Sunday through September from 1 to 4 p.m. If you would like to be a volunteer host, call Donna Hawkins at 663-5994.

The Harlow House is open each Sunday afternoon, 1 to 4 p.m. Beginning June 17 and continuing through September, it also will be open Wednesday through Saturday from 1 to 5 p.m. with Cynthia Howe, our host/curator in charge.

IN MEMORY OF CHET LUCAS AND HAROLD BELDIN...

Two historical society members died in May. We regret the loss of Harold Beldin, 83, a longtime firefighter for District 10. Once a drummer on a Matson cruise ship, he and his late wife Ellen became members years ago when we put out a call for white violets to plant at the Harlow House.

In 1986, Harold wrote a reminiscence for our files about his trips to Troutdale by trolley car to take part in the smelt run:

"After arriving in Troutdale at the west end of town there was a long walk to the river with our gunny sack to get the smelt. How I wish now I had the same energy for that long walk. It was fun, like most things are when you are a kid.

"There was the river and hundred of people getting their share of fish. We got as many as we could comfortably carry back to the train. We, of course, were not the only people doing this so the railway car became crowded with others displaying a sack of smelt and the smell that goes with it. Back to Portland now and home to salt the smelt down for the winter."

Chet Lucas, 79, came to Troutdale as a teenager and worked in the McGinnis celery fields. He was also an employee at the wool pullery and drove a mail truck in Corbett. His father was a minister and the Lucases lived in the church camp that is now the Troutdale City Park.

He drove for Bekins Moving and Storage for years and drove the first set of double trailers in the state. He worked 19 years for Reynolds Metals Co. and lived, with his wife Elizabeth, who survives him, in the Pleasant Valley area for 40 years.

The handsome scales in the rail depot are his gift to our society.

Gifts made to the society in memory of either Harold Beldin or Chet Lucas will go into our endowment fund as living memorials.

ABOUT YOUR NEWSLETTER...

Once upon a time we only sent newsletters in the winter months, as our society's schedule calls for meetings October through May. However, we now have so much going on you will receive a newsletter in July (we may take a break in August) and again in September.

Each time this newsletter comes to you, it represents the efforts of loyal volunteers. Sharon Nesbit writes and edits it. Mary Eaton prints it. And Joyce Stoeckel folds, staples, labels and mails it.

AND MORE THANKS...

A number of area businesses are very good to us. One way you can say thanks is to take your business there.

TROUTDALE THRIFTWAY never fails to give us a bargain price on the goods we buy. TROUTDALE GENERAL STORE collects donations for us and cooperates in opening the rail museum. TAMURA FARMS donates plants. They are located on Troutdale Road south of Stark Street. JIM FUJII FARMS gives the berries we use at our ice cream social. Use his stand, which is usually located at Stark Street and Troutdale Road. EGE SANITATION hauls our garbage away at no charge.

NAMEDROPPERS...Welcome to new members ELICE SKIRVIN, CECILE SWANSON, HELEN REES, RUDY and NORMA MOORE, JACKIE DOLAN and PAULO SOTO...RANKIN DAVIS hosted the Harlow House museum during the May 20 Troutdale Airport Fly-in with help from ALEX JONES...CATHY HAMME has the yard and gazebo of the Harlow House in tiptop shape...HARRY FOWLER has offered to do leveling work around the barn for us...ARMAN and DONNA KLUEHE will seed the area to grass as soon as Fowler's job is done...ELLEN and PAT BROTHERS will open their house for our Sept. 17 home tour. So will MAC and CAROLYN MCCALL, managers of Menucha...BILL NESBIT has trapped nine pesky moles at the Harlow House...PAT SHAW donated three lovely hanging fuchsias to the Harlow House after they were used at the wedding of LAURA BROKAW and TIM BEARD...MARGE SCHMUNK will be chairwoman of our Oct. 7 and 8 rummage sale...SHARON NESBIT was named an Oregon Woman of Achievement by the March of Dimes in May and she was featured in a Channel 2, Spirit of the Northwest television profile...New Sunday hosts at the Harlow House this summer are LAEL LARGER and LINDA HARVEY. Welcome back to VIRGINIA MURPHY and SADIE RILEY who re-enlisted...Thanks to RICH and DOROTHY KERSLAKE and some wonderful volunteers, we made \$600 at our Welcome to May Brunch...Do you know a tree surgeon who can give our walnut tree in front of the Harlow House some care?

ABOUT OUR BARN...

Work has slowed on the barn as we gather money to for the first payment on our construction loan. Dick Jones, Sam Cox, Frank Driver, Bill Stone and Sharon Nesbit worked May 17 to put the first coat of paint on the siding that will go on the building. The paint was donated by Alex Jones. It was a recent decision of the board of directors, that each person who gives a day of work at the barn will be credited for a \$50 donation. So count May 17 as a gift of \$250. (And an aching back or two.)

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