



BYGONE TIMES

Newsletter of the Troutdale Historical Society

March 2006

Please Mark Your Calendars

THS Program/Meeting
Judy Bluehorse Skelton
L & C Flora
Sun., Mar. 19, 2006
2 p.m. City Hall

Lewis & Clark
Farewell Event
Sat. April 1, 2006
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Barn Museum

THS Program/Meeting
1948 Flood
Bring Photos & Stories
Sun., Apr. 23, 2006
2 p.m. City Hall

Annual Tea & Tour
Sun., April 30, 2006
2:00 p.m. ONLY
Menucha

Native Perspectives on the Plants from Lewis & Clark's Journals

Sunday, March 19, 2006, 2 p.m.
At Troutdale City Hall

Herbalist, educator and writer **Judy BlueHorse Skelton** will share knowledge and insights on plants from Meriwether Lewis's journal. Highlighting plants like cedar, Oregon grape and camas, Judy will provide a Native American perspective on relationships with the plant world. An herbal tea will be served.



Oregon Grape

Acknowledgement of the gifts of the natural world is one of the greatest contributions of Native Americans. For thousands of years the use of native plants for food, medicine, and ceremony has been an important part of family and community life. A great number of these plants received mainstream acceptance and were listed in the US Pharmacopoeia, a register of approved drugs used in medical practice.

Judy works with Multnomah and Washington County Indian Education programs, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, OMSI, and many other groups throughout the Northwest. Speaking and leading field trips, herbal walks, and cultural activities, she focuses on the tradition and modern uses of our native plants for food, medicine, utensils, and more.

Of Nez Perce, Cherokee and Chickasaw descent, Judy is a member and mentor of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and assists in the Clinic Medicinary at the National College of Naturopathic Medicine.

REMINDER: April 1st Lewis and Clark Farewell Event at the Barn Museum. A day packed with education and fun. Live fiddle music, historic character portrayals, native Americans in costume performing dance, antique weapons and tools collection.....and more. **Troutdale postmaster Steve Kaufman** will be at the event with the unique commemorative Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Quicksand River postal cancellation.

2006 Tea & Tour: Remember the date, Sunday, April 30, one seating at 2 p.m. Invitations will be in the mail on March 15th, so watch for yours. Return as soon as possible to reserve seats. Menucha in the Columbia River Gorge is going to be a wonderful place to visit.



Helen Althaus c1982

No one is likely to forget the night that **Helen Althaus** read her great-grandmother's letter about traveling the Oregon Trail at a meeting of the Troutdale Historical Society.

Later, Lucia Lorain Bigelow Williams' letter was printed in a book called "The Letter Home," and Helen was here to sign it.

We all knew her as being from Sweet Briar Farm. And likely, many people did not know how accomplished she was until her obituary appeared last month, following her death, Feb. 2, at her home in Ashland at the age of 95.

She was a former Troutdale city councilor, early woman lawyer and feminist and Helen Althaus Park at 248 S.W. 7th Avenue is named for her. Sweetbriar School and park and her former home, now Davis Ripma's house, are part of her pioneer legacy. "She and her mother gave me many happy memories when I was growing up in the Cedar School neighborhood," remembered Bonnie Irwin, widow of former *Outlook* publisher Lee Irwin.

Althaus was born to Amos and Lenore Williams Althaus in Ohio. In a Sept. 9, 1985, interview with *The Gresham Outlook*, she said she was 9 when her family moved to Sweet Briar (sometimes spelled Sweet Brier) farm in Troutdale. Her grandfather, Emmet Bigelow Williams, a Portland lawyer, established the farm at Stark Street and Troutdale Road. When he stayed at the farm he commuted to his law office in Port-

land by horse and buggy.

"They would arise early," she remembered. "My mother would fix him a big breakfast and then they would harness the horses, fast standard breeds, to the buggy. He had them trained at the Salem racetrack. Roads were dusty in those days and you wanted a horse that would pass. My grandfather would leave the farm at 7 a.m. and be in Portland by 9 a.m.. He had to be the first commuter."

Althaus attended Cedar School on Troutdale Road until her mother concluded that the teacher was not well-enough educated and transferred her daughter to Troutdale School. She graduated from Gresham High in 1927 and from the University of Oregon with a degree in chemistry in 1932. After college she took up music study on the violin, but went to work for the ALCOA aluminum plant in Troutdale (later Reynolds Metals) where she ultimately was employed as a chemist. During the war she attended law school at night and in 1945 as the war ended graduated. She was admitted to the Oregon Bar in 1945 at the age of 35.

"I was reluctant to go out knocking on doors looking for a job," she said, "because servicemen were returning at that time." She said she hated to admit that she was in law school while they were fighting a war. "I did not relish competing with them," she said.

She became the first woman to serve as a law clerk for a federal judge in Oregon and was deputy city attorney for the City of Portland under Mayor Dorothy Lee.

In 1953 she entered private practice, forming an all-woman law firm in 1970.

"As times changed," she recalled later, "we could not discriminate and hired a young man lawyer out of the University of Oregon."

She did special assignments for the Bonneville Power Administration and later was employed by the Department of the Interior where her research for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was published in a book in 1980. She retired in 1981.

Althaus served on the Troutdale City council from 1973 to 1982, where she worked on parks and recreation development. She lived at Sweet Brier farm with her mother, Lenore, also a feminist. In the 1950s they became interested in the Ashland Shakespearean festival attending plays every summer. She moved to Ashland after her retirement in 1985.

Althaus was a member of the Troutdale Historical Society, served on the board of the Oregon United Nations Association, was a lifelong member of the ACLU, the Oregon Bar Association World Peace through Law committee, and in 1994 received an award from Oregon Women Lawyers for her contributions to advancing women in the legal profession.

Among the items she gave the historical society, two saddles from Sweet Briar Farm, an antique doll buggy and a set of pictures of the farm.

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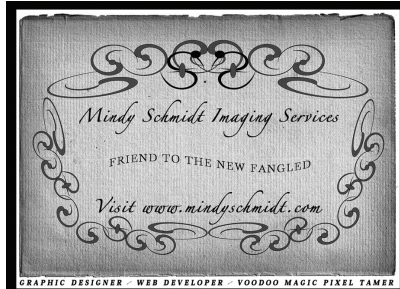
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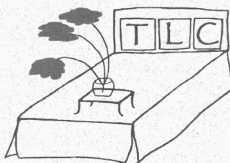
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Members of The Year 2006

Walter & Vi Nasmyth

A husband and wife team -- Troutdale Historical Society photo librarian Walter Nasmyth, and Viola Nasmyth were honored as the society's members of the year at the February meeting. The honor also marked the 80th birthdays for the two. (Vi's 21st birthday was celebrated at the new bar at Tad's Chicken N' Dumplings with a magnum of champagne.)

Walter grew up in Troutdale, youngest of the Nasmyth kids and brings to his work as photo librarian a superior knowledge of car models and years which is priceless when it comes to dating photos. Further, he carries with him the collective memory of his family in Troutdale and the stories he heard from his brothers. When he needs corroboration he consults his brother, Herb, and that is always good for a three-hour argument.

Walter took up the photo project 3 year ago, which had lain neglected for more than 5 years. Previously, Beverly Welker, was our photo librarian. By the time Walter took on the work, it involved picking up the threads of the old system and placing it in the society's Past Perfect software program. When he didn't like the computer that was in use, he supplied his own. Wednesdays are photo days at the depot library with Sharon Nesbit sorting and trouble-shooting, Walter entering and scanning photos and Vi, who got tired of sitting there, doing the filing. A lot of arguing and griping goes on in that process, but in the last two years more than 900 photos have been added to the system and some 700 old photos have been processed into the new system. And a lot of lost photos have been found. This would not have been possible without faithful work on a weekly basis, sometimes once a week, and many times several days a week. Helping in this process with coffee, technical expertise and computer help is THS office clerk Heather Hutzenbiler. The fact that researchers and members can go to the depot, offer a name or place, and come up with every photo in our system has included those subjects, is a miracle of technology. But technology is no better than the guy who puts the information into the system, and in that case, the "guys" are **Walter and Viola Nasmyth**.



In Memory....

We were sad to hear that we lost another friend this past month. **Louise Weber**, 77, died Feb. 26. Louise lived in Corbett. When she was 72, she opened Grannies Stitches. She was always kind and supportive and we will miss her. Her daughters **Phyllis Thiemann** and **Carnetta Boyd** have volunteered many hours and helped with many functions with the historical society, and her son-in-law **Ed Thiemann** serves on the Board of Directors. A lovely and generous family....our thoughts are with you.



Our Thanks ... from THS to the following for their support

Evelyn Deyoung
Anna M. Herbert
Judy Bronkey
Crystal Bayley

Dues Notice:

Dues statements and return envelopes are enclosed in this newsletter.

If you enjoy receiving the newsletter....please do remember to pay the dues. Printing and mailing costs keep rising and your generous support helps keep the historical society going and the newsletters coming.

Change Service Requested

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Mission Statement:
To gather, preserve and make available material relating to the history of the community of Troutdale, the Sandy River, the Columbia River Gorge and nearby area: To stimulate interest in, and knowledge of, the locality's past.

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Troutdale Historical Society
104 S.E. Kibling St.
Troutdale, OR 97060
Phone: 503-661-2164
www.troutdalehistory.org

