



ByGone Times

Quarterly Newsletter of the Troutdale Historical Society

Office: (503)661-2164 Email: TroutdaleHistory@gmail.com

A Day in The Dalles

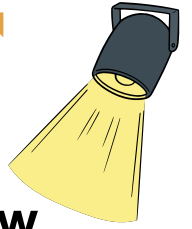
On Saturday, June 21st, 36 bright-eyed members of the Troutdale Historical Society boarded a double-decker bus generously provided by our sponsor, Sasquatch Adventures—for a day filled with glowing signs, gorge-ous geology, and small-town charm in The Dalles. As we rolled eastward along I-84 beside the mighty Columbia River, we were treated to a rolling lecture by Professor Daina Hardisty, Geology Professor at Mt. Hood Community College. Her knowledge (and enthusiasm!) lit up the bus like a neon sign itself. From million-year-old basalt flows to Ice Age floods, Daina painted a dynamic picture of the Gorge that made us all look at the landscape with newfound appreciation. Her contributions, both there and back, were nothing short of rock solid. Thank you, Daina! We arrived at the National Neon Sign Museum around 10:30 a.m., greeted by none other than David



and Kirsten Benko and their stellar team of staff and volunteers. Their energy was electric (quite literally), and they whisked us into small groups for a captivating journey through the history of neon signage. We kicked things off with a film in their theater, showcasing the mesmerizing art of shaping glass with ribbon and cannon torches, purifying the tubes, and filling them with gas. Who knew chemistry and craftsmanship could shine so bright? On the museum floor, we explored a timeline of neon's evolution, including the first neon tube ever made! Yes, the original. David spent 35 years tracking it down, then flew to France and even got its own first-class seat on the return flight. Now that's dedication. His story of collecting and preserving signage is as fascinating as the exhibits themselves. Upstairs, we were awed by their painstaking restoration of the legendary Jantzen Beach Carousel, a true labor of love. With original horses recovered from across the -continued on page 3



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Joy Beldin: A True Joy to Know

If you've spent any time at the Troutdale Historical Society, chances are you've crossed paths with the one and only Joy Beldin, and if you haven't, well, you're missing out on one of Troutdale's finest treasures (and we're not just talking about what's in the museum). Joy has been volunteering with THS for over a decade, and calling her extraordinary feels like an understatement. A lifelong local, Joy wears many hats: daughter, mother, grandmother, sister, friend, and here at THS, she's our Volunteer Docent Coordinator, our Membership Manager, a key player on our 3M Committee, the Events & Programs Committee, editorial proofer, and the lead for First Friday events. We're honestly starting to suspect she's secretly cloned herself. Joy is the calm in the storm, the schedule master, the first to arrive and the last to leave. She answers questions, trains new volunteers, reminds us when it's our time to volunteer, and somehow makes it all look easy. She has also been a guiding light for our staff, personally, she's been my right hand and a constant source of encouragement, wisdom, and a much-needed dose of humor. And when she's not holding down the fort at THS? She's pedaling across the state as a volunteer with Cycle Oregon, clocking more miles on two wheels than most of us do on four. Joy, we couldn't do it without you. Thank you for giving your time, heart, and yes, your endless energy to preserving Troutdale's history and spirit. You are, quite simply, a joy.



Guess Who's Back?

One of Troutdale's most iconic "stump celebrities" is back in town! The original "Entering Troutdale" log carving crafted in the mid-1970s through a Community Enhancement Project, has made its grand return and is now on display at the Barn Exhibit Hall Museum. There were two of these wooden wonders, once standing tall at the city's gateway (257th & Historic Columbia River Hwy), welcoming folks until the early 2000s. They made way for the fabulous Centennial Arch during Troutdale's 100th birthday bash. But like a true Troutdale treasure, one carving survived! Come visit, snap a selfie, and share your memories of these friendly giants from our city's past. Did you wave at it every time you drove by? We want to know!



Yarn at the Barn

~Barn Exhibit Hall Museum~

732 E. Historic Columbia River Highway
Troutdale, OR 97060

Program starts at 10:00am until Noon/FREE

Presented by: Jamie LaCour

Get ready to craft, create, and connect! Our free fiber arts program is back, kicking off on the first Wednesday of every month from 10:00am until noon. Join us monthly at the Barn Exhibit Hall to learn new skills, share techniques, and enjoy crafting camaraderie. The program is FREE and open to ages 14+, supplies available for beginners. Don't miss out!

*Aug 6th - Sep 3rd
Oct 1st - Nov 5th - Dec 3rd*

Columbia Kids Club

~Troutdale Masonic Hall~

202 S.E. Dora Ave, Troutdale, OR 97060

Programs are from 3:00pm until 5:00pm/FREE

Sunday, September 28th

Troutdale's Artistic Legacy

Explore the artistic history of Troutdale and the talented individuals who left their mark.

Sunday, December 21st

Troutdale Through the Ages

Discover the changes Troutdale has seen, from its earliest days to the present.

Stories & Smiles with Santa

~Barn Exhibit Hall Museum~

732 E. Historic Columbia River Highway
Troutdale, OR 97060

Noon - 3:00PM/FREE

Join us for Stories & Smiles with Santa on Friday, December 6th from Noon to 3:00pm at the Barn Exhibit Hall Museum! Enjoy free snacks and warm cider, snap a photo with Santa, and write him your holiday wish list. While you're here, explore our festive holiday exhibit filled with seasonal cheer and local history. This free, family-friendly event is the perfect way to kick off the holidays in Troutdale!

THS PRESENTS

~Glenn Otto Park in the Sam Cox Building~

1102 E. Historic Columbia River Hwy
Troutdale, OR 97060

Doors at 1:00pm /Program at 2:00pm/FREE

Sunday, October 19th

Old Glory Unfolded:

A Journey Through Flag History

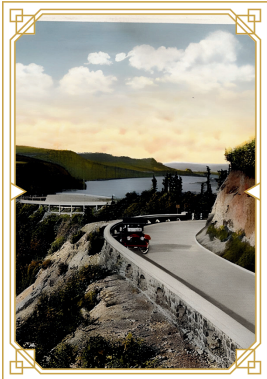
Join us for an exciting THS Presents program led by our very own Director, Chris Garza, as we dive into the fascinating history of the American Flag! Discover its origins, transformations, symbolism, and proper flag etiquette in an engaging and interactive presentation. Enjoy free snacks, refreshments, Q&A with Chris, patriotic flag displays, and fun door prizes! Whether you're a history buff or just flag-curious, this is a perfect afternoon of learning and celebration. Bring a friend and come wave the stars and stripes with pride!

A Day in The Dalles - continued from page 1

country and an artist meticulously repainting each one by hand, the Benkos are literally bringing joy back to life, bolt by bolt, brushstroke by brushstroke. After lunch and a chance to explore local businesses, we regrouped for a walking tour of the East Side Murals. Led by four expert docents, including The Dalles Mayor Rich Mays and his wife, Rose, the tour highlighted epic murals telling the story of The Dalles' past. Bonus fun fact: our own Mayor of Troutdale, Dave Ripma, joined the tour, making it a historic mayoral mingle we won't soon forget. We ended the day back on our rolling blue chariot, with Daina picking up where she left off, closing the loop on Gorge geology as we returned to Troutdale around 5:30 p.m. This incredible day wouldn't have been possible without the generous and enthusiastic support of so many. Our deepest thanks go out to David and Kirsten Benko and the National Neon Sign Museum staff, Kent Krumpschmidt and his crew at Sasquatch Adventures, the City of The Dalles, Mayor Rich and Rose Mays, Professor Daina Hardisty, and the wonderful THS volunteers who helped plan and execute this day, Margaret Rice, Joy Beldin, and Jamie LaCour. And of course, thank you to all who joined us.

More THS Treks are on the horizon for 2026! We're cooking up some unforgettable adventures, history, sights, and maybe even snacks. Mark your calendars and your hiking boots... we'd love to have you along for the ride!

JUST THE OTHER DAY

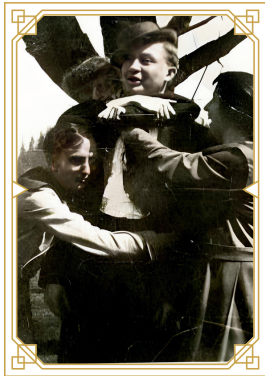


1916 – Troutdale is on the Map

The Columbia River Highway opens, turning Troutdale into the Gateway to the Gorge. Suddenly, folks are driving to Multnomah Falls instead of milking cows. Tourists roll in, and Oregon's most scenic shortcut becomes everyone's favorite reason to take the long way home.

1917 – Smells Like Success

The Troutdale Cooperative Cannery opens by the tracks, churning out apples, berries, and jobs for local folks. From spring to fall, the whole town smells like pie, and nobody's complaining. It's a sweet victory for farmers and a very fruity year for Troutdale.

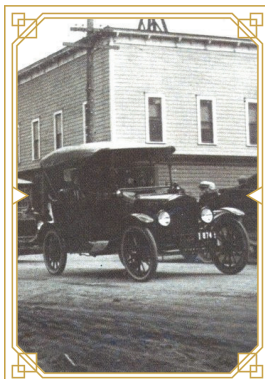


1918 – Flu Season Gets Serious

The Spanish Flu hits Troutdale, shutting down schools, churches, and good times. Staying home loses its charm fast. Masks go on, events go off, and folks hunker down. It's a tough year, but the town pulls through, quieter, wiser, and really tired of soup.

1920– A New Schoolhouse

In 1920, a brand-new Troutdale Elementary School building was constructed to replace the older, overcrowded schoolhouse. Located just off Buxton Road, the new facility gave local students more room to learn their reading, writing, and maybe sneak a spitball or two when the teacher wasn't looking.



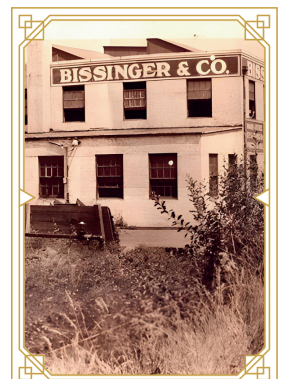
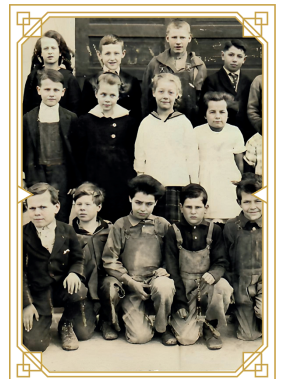
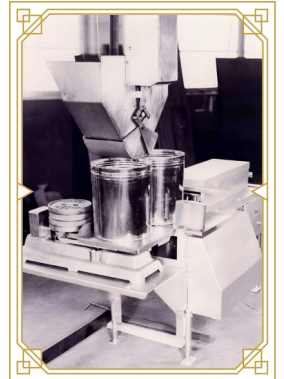
1922 – Paved, Proud, and Picture Perfect

In 1922, Troutdale gained a new identity as the western gateway of the recently completed Historic Columbia River Highway. Stretching from Troutdale to The Dalles, the highway, America's first planned scenic route, ushered in a travel boom, with tourists stopping in town as they began exploring the spectacular Gorge landscape.

1925 – Bissinger to the Rescue

In 1925, the Bissinger Wool Pullery moved into Troutdale, and just in time! With jobs scarce and morale low, this wooly wonder brought new life (and paychecks) to town. The scent of wet wool might've raised eyebrows, but folks didn't mind, because Troutdale's economy was back on the map, one fleece at a time.

- *A Note of Thanks: We're thrilled to bring back a beloved local favorite, our community column inspired by longtime Troutdale historian and THS founder, Sharon Nesbit. Sharon's original column was a staple of our local paper, filled with wit, heart, and deep love for this town. It's an honor to carry on that tradition. Thank you, Sharon, for the inspiration, and to our readers for the warm welcome back!*



When the Sky Turned Gray

It was a quiet Sunday morning in Troutdale on May 18, 1980, until it wasn't. At exactly 8:32 a.m., Mount St. Helens erupted with the force of 24 megatons of TNT. That's 1,600 times the size of the Hiroshima bomb. The top 1,300 feet of the mountain simply blew off. While the volcano is located in southwest Washington, over 65 miles north of Troutdale as the crow flies, our little town was in for a big surprise. Residents remember hearing what sounded like distant thunder, or a sonic boom. By late morning, the sky had darkened. In the following hours, days, and secondary eruptions, ash drifted down like dirty snowflakes. The once-clear views of the Columbia River Gorge disappeared behind a wall of haze. For many in Troutdale, it was the first time they realized that our scenic Cascade peaks weren't just pretty backdrops, they were active volcanoes. Troutdale didn't get the worst of it, that fell to eastern Washington and Idaho, but we got enough ash to coat cars, lawns, and nerves. The fine, gritty material infiltrated everything. Schools closed. Local stores sold out of dust masks. Kids with paper towels tied around their faces ran around pretending they were in some sort of sci-fi apocalypse, (because they kind of were.) The ash clogged air filters, jammed lawnmowers, and caused minor engine damage in everything from cars to irrigation pumps. Troutdale's public works scrambled to clean streets and storm drains. Some folks vacuumed their roofs to prevent collapse under the weight of volcanic debris. Others jarred the ash like it was a souvenir from the end times, (yes, people still have jars today.) Though the skies cleared within a week, the eruption had long-lasting impacts. Shipping was briefly halted on the Columbia River as ash and sediment flowed into the water. Air traffic at Portland International Airport (just 10 miles west) was grounded or rerouted. Even wildlife patterns shifted as elk and birds fled the destruction zone. Perhaps more significantly, the eruption was a wake-up call. Suddenly, everyone wanted to know about the "other mountains." Mount Hood, just 45 miles from Troutdale, was identified as a high-risk volcano. It last erupted in the 1780s and remains "potentially active," according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Mount Adams, Mount Jefferson, and others also got a long-overdue share of attention. Geologists reassured the public that any future eruption would likely come with ample warning. Still, the eruption of St. Helens prompted upgrades to monitoring systems and emergency response planning across the region. Troutdale, once content as the "Gateway to the Gorge," was now on alert as part of a volcanic neighborhood. Today, the eruption lives on in stories, scrapbooks, and the occasional sealed jar of ash hiding in someone's garage. It brought awe, fear, and a touch of absurdity to everyday life in Troutdale. And it reminded us that even our most solid-looking mountains are capable of surprising us. Next time you drive east along I-84, take a glance at Mount Hood. She's beautiful—and very much awake.



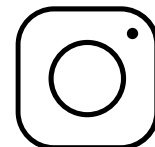
Sources - U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) - Mt. St. Helens Eruption Overview - Oregon Historical Society - Eyewitness Accounts from 1980 - "Ash Across the Cascades" - The Oregonian, May 1980 Archive - Multnomah County Emergency Management - Volcanic Risk Preparedness Guide - Troutdale Historical Society Oral History Archive (Collected 2005–2020)



[FaceBook.com/TroutdaleHistory.org](https://www.facebook.com/TroutdaleHistory.org)



www.TroutdaleHistory.org



[Instagram.com/BarnMuseum](https://www.instagram.com/BarnMuseum)

NEW MEMBERS

Stayce Blume - Ric Catron - Nick & Norma Haag - Linda Holden - Daniel Jones - Jennifer & James Kelley - Kent Krumpschmidt - Harley Parmendter - Kathleen Smith - Shadi Stop - Elisabeth Weltin - Tim & Xeandra Westcott

NEW BUSINESS SPONSORS

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NEW CORPORATE SPONSOR

Troutdale Masonic Hall
(Fairview #92 & Gresham #152)

Help Support Our Mission

Support history without having to time travel! Becoming a member or sponsor of the Troutdale Historical Society helps us preserve, share, and celebrate our community's rich past, from barn dances to big floods. Your support keeps our museums open, our programs thriving, and our stories alive. Plus, it gives you bragging rights as a local history hero. Join us, because history doesn't preserve itself (and we've tried asking).

For more information go to www.TroutdaleHistory.org, email Director@troutdalehistory.org, or call (503)661-2164

Friends of History Remembered

Shirley Harp Lambert

April 7, 1929 – June 6, 2025

Shirley Harp Lambert's life was one of love, laughter, and deep community roots. Born in 1929, she moved to Oregon as a teenager and graduated from Corbett High School around 1947. At a Corbett dance, she met Gerald "Gerry" Lambert, and they were married in 1950, sharing 72 wonderful years together. Shirley and Gerry built their life and home in Troutdale, raising three children, Michele, Gerald, and Renee on the Historic Columbia River Highway. Shirley had a passion for growing roses, playing bingo, golfing, bowling, and doting on her dog. She volunteered during elections and worked for the State of Oregon, counting cars when it was still done by hand. A proud member of the Troutdale Historical Society for 25 years, Shirley believed in preserving the stories of the place she called home. She and Gerry loved to travel, especially to casinos, Laughlin, Nevada being a favorite destination. She was preceded in death by Gerry and her grandson John. Shirley is survived by her three children, granddaughters Amanda and Arielle, and great-grandchildren Waylon, Madeline, William, and Hadley. Her kindness and commitment to community will be remembered with heartfelt gratitude.



What Should We Exhibit Next? You Decide!

We've brought you bootleggers and barn dances, riverboats and railroads, but what's next? That's where you come in! As we plan for upcoming exhibits at the Troutdale Historical Society, we want to know: what stories are you curious about? Would you love to see more about our agricultural roots? A look into Troutdale's geology or natural wonders? Maybe a deep dive into local businesses, cultural traditions, community leaders, or the politics that shaped our past? Whether it's something serious, surprising, or just plain fun, we're listening! Your ideas help us bring history to life in meaningful and exciting ways. Drop us a line at Director@troutdalehistory.org or give us a call at 503-661-2164. We can't wait to hear what YOU want to explore next!



Barn Exhibit Hall

Thurs - Sun / Noon - 3pm

Harlow House

Thurs - Sun / Noon - 3pm

Rail Depot

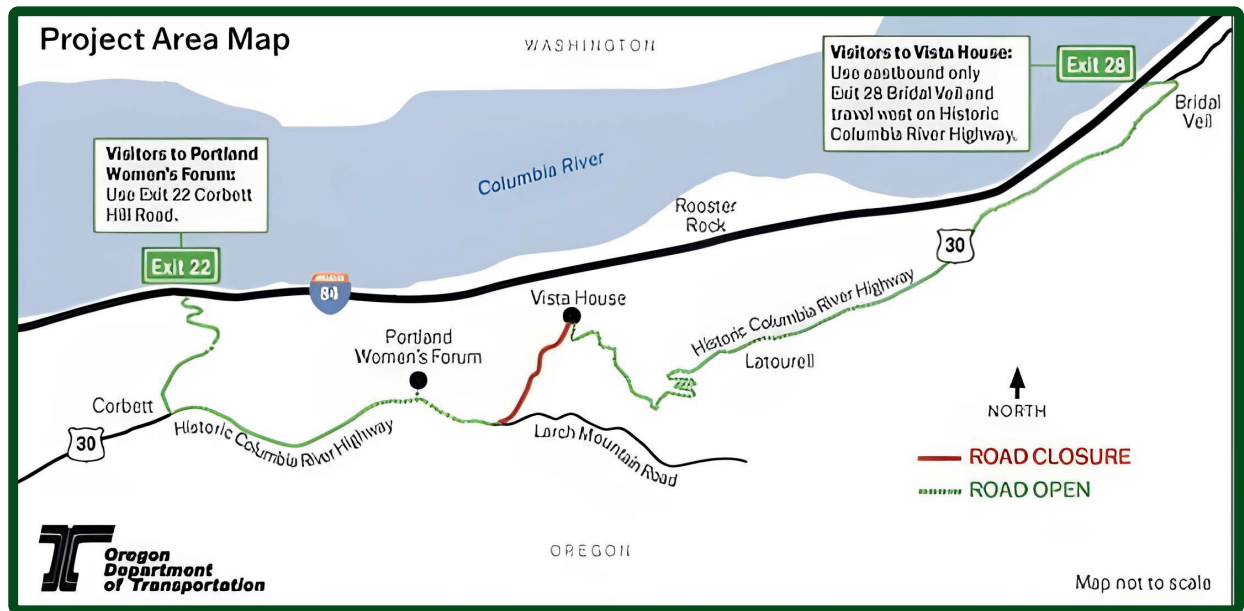
Mon - Wed / 9am - 3pm
Thurs - Sun / 9am - 5pm

Where the Road Meets the River: A Drive Through History

When the Historic Columbia River Highway began opening in 1916, it wasn't just Oregon's pride, it was a marvel of engineering, scenery, and vision. Completed in 1922, the full route from Troutdale to The Dalles became America's first planned scenic highway. It was the brainchild of engineer and landscape visionary Samuel C. Lancaster and Sam Hill, with essential support from civic leaders like Simon Benson and John B. Yeon. Together, they believed that nature's beauty should be accessible to everyone, not just those willing to scale cliffs in hobnail boots. The highway hugged basalt cliffs, curved through tunnels, and passed waterfalls close enough to mist your windshield. It was more than a road through the Columbia River Gorge, it was a road within it. Lancaster famously avoided straight lines, designing curves to follow the land's natural flow, saying the road should "blend with the landscape and not mar them." Landmarks like Crown Point's Vista House and the Mosier Twin Tunnels made the highway an engineering and aesthetic triumph. Nervous passengers may have clutched door handles on sharp turns, but they were also treated to unforgettable views. Want to relive the early road trip experience? Stop by the Barn Exhibit Hall Museum at 732 E. Historic Columbia River Hwy in Troutdale. Our permanent exhibit on the Historic Columbia River Highway is one of the most comprehensive in the world, featuring early construction photos, vintage road signs, personal stories, and even a recreated guardrail. And here's a bonus: if you're a Multnomah County resident, active or retired military, or receive EBT benefits, admission is completely free, no coupon or secret handshake required. Open Thursday through Sunday, Noon to 3 PM. Come see how this highway shaped Oregon's story, curves, cliffs, and all.



H.C.R.H. NEWS & UPDATES



Heads up, Gorge travelers! Starting Monday, July 7, the Historic Columbia River Highway (U.S. 30) will close at Larch Mountain Road for landslide repairs. The closure spans from milepost 8.7 to 9.5, between Portland Women's Forum and Vista House, and is expected to last through September. This section sits on a large, unstable ancient landslide area that's seen increasing movement. Detours via I-84 Exits 22 and 28 will remain open for alternate access. Visit [Tripcheck.com](https://www.tripcheck.com) for updates.

**Note: A fall closure near Multnomah Falls will follow as the East Viaduct undergoes long-term repairs through spring 2026. This vital scenic route requires regular maintenance to stay safe and open, especially where the highway crosses unstable ground near Crown Point.*

A Message from the President of THS



Dave Ripma

On June 21st, I was honored to join members, volunteers, and guests of the Troutdale Historical Society on a memorable trip to The Dalles. Highlights included a great geology tour of the gorge with Mt. Hood Geology professor at MHCC Daina Hardesty who gave a running commentary all the way to The Dalles. The trip also included a fascinating walking tour of the East Side murals, led by The Dalles Mayor, Rich Mays. His insightful commentary brought each mural to life, blending history, local pride, and a touch of humor that kept us all engaged. It was inspiring to see how art and storytelling preserve the community's heritage in such a vibrant way. Trips like these remind me why our work at THS is so important, connecting people to the rich history that shapes our region. I sincerely thank everyone who participated, and I look forward to more shared adventures and discoveries in the future.

With best wishes, sincerely,

THS Board President

David Ripma

Welcome Aboard, Marlee!

We're thrilled to welcome Marlee Boxler as the newest member of the Troutdale Historical Society Board of Directors! Marlee brings a wealth of experience, a sharp planning mind, and a true love for our community. Since joining the City of Troutdale in 2017, Marlee has worn multiple hats, first as an assistant planner, then associate planner, and now as our Economic Development Coordinator since 2020. She holds both a bachelor's degree in architectural studies and a master's in urban planning from the University of Kansas (Rock Chalk, Jayhawk!). Before making Troutdale her professional home, Marlee sharpened her skills in city planning and community development in Kansas and Missouri, including as a planning intern for the City of Olathe and as a communications and planning manager for MainCor in Kansas City. We're excited to have her strategic mind, dedication to place-making, and sense of humor on our team. We're pretty sure she can navigate zoning maps in her sleep, so just imagine what she'll do with a historic preservation file! Welcome aboard, Marlee! We're glad you're here.



THS BOARD

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President: Dave Ripma

Vice President: Jeff Neiger

Treasurer: Tina Bruce

Secretary: Helen Wand

Board Members:

Rip Caswell -

Joyce Belcher - Ann Chatterton

- Marlee Boxler

Director:

Christopher L. Garza

Thank You, Twila Mysinger and Julia Warner

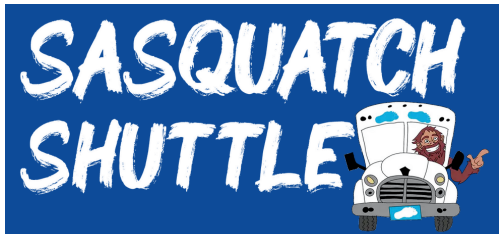
The Troutdale Historical Society extends our deepest gratitude to Twila Mysinger and Julia Warner for their years of dedicated volunteer service. Their incredible efforts have helped transform our collections and archives, taking us from handwritten 3x5 index cards into the digital age. This was no small task, countless hours were spent carefully cataloging, organizing, and entering decades of historical records into a searchable system that will benefit researchers, visitors, and future generations. Their commitment ensured that fragile, fading documents were preserved with care, and valuable pieces of Troutdale's story are now accessible at the click of a button. Their attention to detail, patience, and passion for preserving history have left a lasting legacy at THS. Beyond their technical skills, their kindness and enthusiasm brightened our offices and inspired our team. As they step into new adventures, we offer our heartfelt thanks and best wishes. Your contributions will not be forgotten, and your work will continue to support our mission for years to come.

Thank you, Twila and Julia!

A Big Thank You to all of Our Sponsors



THE CITY OF
TROUTDALE
OREGON

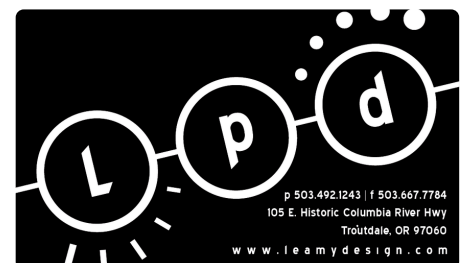


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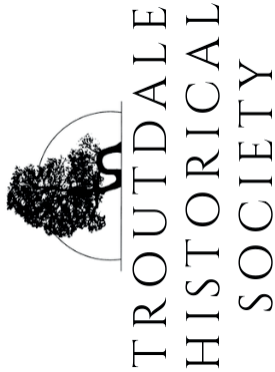
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Troutdale, OR, 97060

Office Location:
732 E Historic Columbia River Hwy
Troutdale, OR, 97060

Phone: 503-661-2164
Email: Troutdalehistory@gmail.com
Website: www.TroutdaleHistory.org

The Troutdale Historical Society is organized and shall be operated exclusively to gather, preserve and make available museum, record, and other material relating to the history of the community of Troutdale, the northern portion of the Sandy River, and nearby areas to stimulate an interest in, and knowledge of the locality's past.

Thank you for your support!



WWW.TROUTDALEHISTORY.ORG

JOIN US AND ENJOY FREE ACCESS TO ALL OUR MUSEUMS, 10% OFF AT THE BARN STORE GIFT SHOP, QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS DELIVERED RIGHT TO YOUR INBOX OR MAILBOX, AND \$10 OFF YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH THE OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

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*Must be an active member to purchase a Gift Membership for another person.

☐ \$15 Gift Membership _____
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MAKE A DONATION

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