



BYGONE TIMES

A Newsletter of the TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

April, 2000

Editor, Sharon Nesbit, 665-0423

Living history: a reenactment of an interview with lady mayors

Our program, **Sunday, April 16, at 2 p.m. in Troutdale City Hall**, will be something we have never tried before but always wanted to do -- **time travel**.



What would it have been like, sitting down with those two remarkable Troutdale women, Clara Latourell Larsson and Laura Harlow and having a visit? What would we ask them about their terms as mayors of our city, Clara in 1914, Laura in 1924. Did people doubt their ability? What was it in

those ladies that caused people to vote for them?

Since last fall, Mary Bryson, cast as Clara Larsson, and Connie Purvis in the role of Laura Harlow, have been studying the lives and background of the two women who served as early mayors in Troutdale. The pair were friends. They sang at nearly every wedding and funeral in the community. They shared heart-breaking losses in the deaths of their children and a devotion to their community.

Join us for this living history event.

McMenamins wine toasts THS, Edgefield's 10th anniversary

On June 7, the eve of Edgefield's 10th anniversary, we open a wine with a special label honoring the work of our historical society and Mike & Brian McMenamin in saving and preserving the old county poor farm.

With a working title of *Poor Farm Pinot Gris*, this wine, product of the Troutdale vineyard, has a label bearing our historical society logo. We receive \$1 from the sale of each bottle. The project is the brainstorm of our Ways and Means committee and Susan Tissot, who did a similar project at another museum.

Mary Bryson and a team of volunteers plan to pop the cork in a gala party at Blackberry Hall called "Vintage Evening at the Poor Farm." This dinner and auction, at a cost of about \$50 a plate, will celebrate our years of fighting to save Edgefield. We will toast some of the heroes who stalled demolition of the site and note the joys of a preservation that brought new vitality to our community.

You can help in several ways. Want to attend? Phone our office, 661-2164 for an invitation. And see Page 2 on how you might offer an item for the auction.

CALENDAR April & May

Meetings

Sunday, 2 p.m. April 16, Troutdale City Hall

A chat with Clara and Laura, a reenactment by Connie Purvis as Laura and Mary Bryson as Clara, interviewed by Sharon Nesbit.

Sunday, 2 p.m., May 21, Troutdale City Hall

Our second annual tour of East Multnomah County graveyards with cemetery historian, Stan Clarke.

Spring Events

Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., April 8, Glenn Otto Park

Grannie's Attic Rummage sale

Saturday, May 6, 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. Tea & Tour

Third annual Tea & Tour and Brickhaven Bed & Breakfast, Corbett. Cost \$35 a person.

Thursday-Saturday, May, 18, 19, 20

Baker City & Beyond

A three day trip to Oregon Trail sites between Pendleton and Ontario with a two night stay at the Geiser Grand Hotel in Baker City.

Board of Directors

Wednesday, April 5, 7 p.m., barn

Wednesday, May 3, 7 p.m., barn

Coming Events

June 3 & 4, Troutdale Ice Cream Social
June 7, Vintage Evening at the Poor Farm

Harlow House

Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m.

Depot Museum & Store

Closed for the winter

Spring Trek goes to Baker City & Beyond

Our spring trek takes off Thursday, May 18, headed for Pendleton for the Umatilla cultural center that offers an Indian point of view of the Oregon Trail. From there we go to Baker City for two nights at the restored Geiser Grand Hotel, a prime rib dinner and outings to Four Rivers Cultural Center at Ontario, the regional Oregon Trail museum in Baker City, the national center at Flagstaff Hill and two picnics at other Oregon Trail sites. Cost is \$325 per person (double occupancy). If you want to attend, phone the historical society office, 661-2164, for details.

Harlow House

100 years

(Continued from last month, Lou and Laura Harlow, in the Harlow House)

In 1921, the Harlow's son, Jack, died of a brain tumor. In 1926, Laura, a musician, sang at the wedding of son Sam and Faye Louise Parsons. However Sam had been badly shocked in an accident while working for an electric company at the age of 18. The results of that accident debilitated him and he died at the age of 28 in 1936, leaving Faye and two little daughters to survive alone. A year later, in 1937, the Harlow's only surviving son, Bob, died of Hodgkins Disease. That same year, Lou Harlow also died. Laura began to suffer crippling arthritis in 1928 and was in a wheel chair to the end of her life. She was still in the Harlow House in 1940, when she sold the home to her friends and former neighbors, Lee and Mabel Evans. Eventually Laura moved to Portland where she lived until her death on July 4, 1949.

Sam's wife, Faye Parsons Harlow, and his daughters, Bonita Taylor and Ginger Allen, have contributed a great deal to our understanding of how the Harlows lived. Ginger devoted most of her retirement years to family research and the Harlows, giving back to the house a number of things that belonged to the family. The only two Harlow objects that came with the house are the china cabinet in the rear parlor, said to belong to Captain Harlow, and the kitchen wood stove, found in pieces in the basement. Since then, the Harlows have given us the family Bible, a Chinese vase, the family's mah jongg set, some other knick knacks, a sea-grass rocker that belonged to one of the granddaughters, Laura Harlow's Campfire leader costume and the clock on the mantel piece. The little bronze figure on top is a Harlow gift as well. It was not meant to fit on the clock, "but the family always kept it there" and we do, too.

This September, Ginger Harlow Allen and her husband, Chuck, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in Troutdale, marking the date with events at the Harlow House, which has been home to their family.

(Next month: Lee and Mabel Evans in the Harlow House)

Gifts

To the Barn

Elice Swanson, Shirley & Lawrence Yost

To the Endowment Fund

John Bryson, Donna Hawkins, Bonita Jenkins, Gloria Ladum, Ken Lantz, Eleanor Lundergan, Herbet & Clover Nasmyth, Ken Simmitt Jr., Bruce & Helen Towsley, Arlene Wands.

To the General Fund

Bette Boyd, Bob & Tamara Campbell, Annell Carlson, Dodi Davies, Evelyn DeYoung, Lois Douglass, Dorothy Evans, Ginger Harlow Allen, Alice Hartje, Barbara Huston, Henry & Geneva Kellogg, Mike & Pauline Morrow, David Rees, Debbie Schoepper and Thomas & Sarah Thompson.

Gifts of Membership

Ken and Joann Otto from Helen Otto; John Sherman, Kathleen Dombrowski & Louise Blohm from June Sherman Nasmyth; Margery Smith; Kathy Miner, Suzy Daggett & Bob Allegre from Bob Strebin.

IN MEMORY:

Richard Cereghino

Doris Caramella and Bob & Louise Dix

Dominic Balesteri

Phyllis Balesteri

Bob Hughes

Mary Hughes

Sam Cox

Frank & Jean Driver

Bill Baker

Florence Baker

Welcome: Director's Club

Florence Baker, Penny Balch, Ted & Alvera Binn, Judy Bronkey, John Bryson, Marguerite Campbell, Scott & Eileen Cunningham, Gordon & Ione Doolittle, Gerry & Madeline Grimm, Beverly Jones, Gerald & Shirley Lambert, Sheryl Maydew, Mona & Bob Mitchoff, Patricia O'Brien, Helen Otto, Pat Smith, Terry & Jodi Smoke, Dorothy Sturges, Ed & Phyllis Thiemann, Beverly Welker, Harvey & Betty Wierprecht.

Auction items needed for June 7 Edgefield party

Save June 7, 2000 for a gala Vintage Evening at the Poor Farm. The Troutdale Historical Society is hosting a dinner to kick off the 10th anniversary of McMenamain's Edgefield and a celebration to unveil the wine label McMenamain's is producing to honor the Troutdale Historical Society. In conjunction with the dinner and wine label events, THS is having a fund-raiser auction. We will hold both live and silent auctions.

If any of you have items that would be suitable for the auction and that you would like to donate, please let us know at the Harlow House. You can leave a message on the voice mail at 661-2164. Do you own an antique auto that you would auction for a day? Do you have a boat that someone could bid on for a day cruise on the Columbia? Do you have a business that lends itself to an auction? Bed and Breakfast, licensed massage, nail care, florist, hair cutting and/or styling, nursery plants, landscaping services, house or office cleaning, and car detailing are just a few types of service businesses that would make good auction items.

Do you own a time-share or a house at the beach, desert, or mountains, that you would be willing to auction for a week's stay?

If you are interested in donating any auction item, or if you know of someone we could contact for an auction item, please call 661-2164.

**** Odds & Ends****

Our Troutdale timeline for the south wall of the barn is in production. Like all such projects, it took longer than we thought. When it is ready to introduce to the public, we believe we'll call the event, "It's About Time."

We hope to have a Lewis & Clark exhibit in the barn for the bicentennial of the expedition. If you are interested in the explorers and want to help, call 661-2164.

Dainty cookie bakers needed. Or would that be, bakers of dainty cookies needed? If you like to bake and would make a batch of pretty little cookies for our May 6 tea, call Sharon Nesbit, 665-0423.

And thanks to Connie Purvis who took her program on crimes and catastrophes to the Masonic lodge.

Curator's Corner by Mary Bryson

Society member **Lois Coons** generously donated some wonderful artifacts to add to our ever-growing collection of items from local families. Among those items are a pocket knife John W. Coons received from his mother at Christmas in 1902, a gold pocket watch with fob and a stand, and rings which once belonged to Milo and Helen Coons. The jewelry is currently on display in the Harlow House. The rest of the donation includes family papers, military papers, personal letters, and Gresham High School yearbooks from 1936 to 1939. The yearbooks contain photos of Troutdale students Merle and Leo Coons, Gordon Doolittle, Merle and Malcolm McNeel, Bob and Harold Lewis, Bob Dix, and many others.

At the Harlow House we have a new exhibit featuring some of our vintage clothing. From January to June we will display clothing from 1900 to the 1940s. Presently we have a 1920s flapper dress, a 1940s schoolgirl dress, and some early 1900s christening gowns. Also featured is our collection of women's hats and some women and men's accessories. Be sure to visit the Harlow House Museum to see this fantastic display.

Again, I am indebted to some very dedicated volunteers, **Barbara Welsh, Mona Mitchoff, and Jean Holman**, all society members, who are giving up their Tuesday mornings to help at the Harlow House. They are the talents behind the design and implementation of the clothing exhibit, and they are beginning the much needed and long overdue inventory of our artifact collection.

In memory

Reba Mitchell died March 15. A retired Fairview city recorder, she was a past president of the Fairview Rockwood Wilkes Historical Society and a member of our society.

Most recently, she edited the Fairview Rockwood Wilkes newsletter. Her family suggests remembrances to that society.

Questions in the mail

Ron Weiprecht e-mailed about the old mines on Jackson Park Road. He recalls that he and **Gary Butler** dug one out in the late 1960s finding four basic rooms and remains of old support timbers. A second mine collected water proving a source for the Jackson Park Road homes.

Irene Douglass Waldo in her memories of Troutdale described them as clay mines, sources for material for pottery and earthen ware. Many river towns in Oregon were known for the clay ware produced there.

Another e-mail request comes from a woman hoping to learn something about the Ream family. Her husband's great aunt, **Edith Ream Jackson**, gave her address in 1944 as 2647 NE Buxton St., Multnomah County, Oregon. Apparently the family had a berry farm somewhere near Division Street. Have a clue on this one? Call our office at 661-2164 and leave name and phone number, or e-mail SNesbit@aol.com.

From **Alexis Harrington**, a Gresham writer of historical romances, we received and answered a request for background information on Fairview and Troutdale for a historical romance set in our area in the 1890s. The book is to be called "Allie's Moon."

From **Donna Hodsdon** we received a request for information on her great-great-grandfather, **Benjamin Hall**, pioneer of 1851. The Mountain View Stark Cemetery is also known as Hall Cemetery. Hodsdon's great grandmother, Lavinia Hall, married Peter Williams, who was connected to the Hicklin family. Any answers here?

From **Tom Cowling** of Portland, a request for information about his ancestor, a circuit riding preacher who served Troutdale, Springdale and Latourell from 1899-1902.

And for those who like East County History, **Clarence Mershon's** second history, Living East of the Sandy River, is now available from the Crown Point Country Historical Society. Contact **Dorothy Larson**, 30041 Woodard Road, Troutdale, 97060.

Reminder:

Carnetta Boyd in our historical society office at the Harlow House reminds us to pay our dues. Lose your envelope? Call the Harlow House, 661-2164.



Troutdale in 2000

Calendar Order Form
Mail: Troutdale Historical Society
104 S.E. Kibling St.
Troutdale, OR 97960

Please send me ___ copy(s) of the Troutdale Historical Society calendar.

Calendars are \$10 each. Shipping and handling is \$2, no matter how many ordered.

Name:-----

Address:-----

City/ZIP:-----

Telephone:-----

Thank you, Albertsons

In February we received a check from Albertson's Stores for \$171, the result of our community partnership with the corporation. It works this way, present your Troutdale Historical Society partnership card when you shop at Albertson's and the firm donates a certain percentage to our non-profit organization.

An easy way to give. We have ordered more partnership cards. If you want to receive one as soon as they arrive, please call the Harlow House and leave your name and address.



Invitation to tea Saturday, May 6



Invitations for our annual Tea and Tour, this year on Saturday, May 6, are available to our

members.

This year the tea is at Brickhaven Bed and Breakfast, in the Columbia River Gorge at Corbett near Menucha. If you have not received an invitation and want one, please call our office, 661-2164. Places at our tea -- there are two seatings -- must be reserved by payment in advance.

Troutdale Historical
Society
104 S.E. Kibling Street
Troutdale, OR 97060

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**A CHAT WITH
CLARA & LAURA...**



**LIVING HISTORY,
APRIL 16**

Profile: Mary Bryson
by Arlene Wands

"Look at this," said Mary Bryson softly, as she opened the box. She took out the items gently, lovingly. "The woman who sent us this box was married to a man from Troutdale. Here's his 1939 Gresham High School yearbook." Mary smiled as she carefully sorted through the contents. "All four years of his high school yearbooks are here! Just some amazing old things. Even his watch and watch stand."

Mary closed the box. "You're witnessing just one of the benefits of working here. This woman lives in Idaho, but she had a sense of *our* history and wanted to help us preserve it. People are wonderful about giving us things like this."

Mary is the Harlow House Museum curator, but refer to her as such and she finds the whole thing kind of amusing. "I'm really just a fake curator," she said, laughing. "I have no idea what a real 'curator' does!" Well, bluff or no, she

has been at that historical helm since 1997, and her claims that "I just alphabetize things and put numbers on them" are quickly dismissed by those who know better. Mary's reverence for items from a long-ago time is so obvious. It shows in the way she delicately fingers the tiny buttons on a vintage dress. Her voice softens, her face shines, whenever she leafs through a pile of antique documents.

"I just love these old papers," she'll say. "Here is someone's WWI Army discharge. Here's a marriage certificate from 1920. How about this: someone's 1935 Troutdale Grade School Certificate!" She pauses. "Look at the handwriting." And the writing is, indeed, beautiful – flowing and cursive, so unlike the computer-generated documents of today.

Mary and her family live in Springdale ("just five miles from where I was born") and she makes no secret of her preference for living "where there are no sidewalks, and no yellow lines in the streets." The Troutdale she grew up in

had a population of 500. Mary tells of a time when she picked berries for Bob and Louise Dix. (That site is "Strawberry Meadows" today.) She recalls when the "Moffitt and Britton Electrical Co." set-up outside speakers and benches so the local kids could sit after school and enjoy that wonder of wonders —TV!— thru the store window. (A Troutdale pizza parlor occupies the spot now.) As a newlywed, she lived for a while in the old Buxton House, whose roots originated in 1864. (The house sat in the middle of what is now 257th Street.)

She grew up to teach English at Corbett and Gresham High Schools. She was Gresham's department chair for several years.

Some people have a sense of history in their bones. Mary's connection to the area is sublimely personal. "I see old marriage certificates, birth certificates, documents from people that were part of my childhood, people long gone now. It's like I get to 'renew acquaintances' with old friends – and my own past." She smiles. "I love what I do!"