



# BYGONE TIMES

Newsletter of the Troutdale Historical Society

February 2007

## Please Mark Your Calendars

### Feb. Program Meeting

*Sun. Feb. 18*

*2:00 p.m.*

### *Annual Membership Meeting*

*Sam Cox Building at Glenn Otto Park*

*Also on the program*

**Author Clarence Mershon**  
speaking about his latest  
books, *Along the Sandy, our*  
*Nikkei Neighbors*

**and**

*Columbia River Highway from*  
*the Sea to the Wheat Fields of*  
*Eastern Oregon.*

### March 2

First Friday Artwalk

### March 18

### *100 Years in Photos*

Please bring photos to the meeting. Prizes for oldest photo, funniest photo, ugliest photo....well you get the idea....categories will be defined and posted in the March newsletter.

### *2007 Troutdale Celebrates*

*100 years*

## FEBRUARY MEETING

Clarence Mershon will be at Glenn Otto Park on Feb. 18 at 2 p.m. in the Sam Cox Building to talk about Troutdale History and his new books, *Along the Sandy River, Our Nikkei Neighbors* and *Columbia River Highway from Sea to the Wheat Fields of Eastern Oregon*.

*Along the Sandy River, Our Nikkei Neighbors* pays homage to our neighbors of Japanese heritage who farmed the land, went to school in East Multnomah County and fought along side their friends and classmates during World War II. The book also documents the time that many of these local families spent in various internment camps in the region, the losses they suffered and the hardships they endured.

Clarence's second book, *The Columbia River Highway from the Sea to the Wheat Fields of Eastern Oregon*, recounts the trials and tribulations of building the Columbia River Highway. Both of his grandfathers worked on the highway. This book contains dozens upon dozens of marvelous photographs of before, during and after the construction of the highway.

Clarence will also present a slide show and copies of his books will be available for purchase after the meeting.

For more information, call the THS office at 503-661-2164. Plan to be there on Feb. 18, 2007, at 2 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.

## 100 Years Ago

### Troutdale

An ordinance prohibiting the carrying of concealed weapons, the roaming about streets after midnight and making intoxication unlawful was passed by the city council on Oct. 8, 1907. The penalty for violating these provisions was a fine of not more than \$ 10 or by imprisonment in jail for not more than five days...

A disastrous fire swept through Troutdale burning the 1890's buildings. A church built on the hillside two blocks from the business district was one of the few buildings that survived the fire, along with a few homes...

Aaron Fox was instrumental in incorporating the city in 1907 and became its first mayor...

### Beyond the Bluff

The Matheson of 1907 was a luxury car boasting 50 horsepower and costing \$5,500. The top was an extra \$250...

Oregon State Penitentiary employed 33 people to take care of the 349 prisoners confined at the time. Only two of those prisoners were female...

An article in the *Oregon Journal* reported that United Telegraph Company planned to build a big wireless station in Portland on Council Crest...

## Troutdale was “The Village”

They say it takes a village to raise a child. Troutdale used to be that village.

January’s Troutdale Historical Society’s meeting “Growing up in Troutdale” in the 1950’s was a stroll down memory lane with Gene, Neil and Greg Handy and Mary and Bill McGinnis. The interviews were conducted by Len Otto in front of a standing room only crowd at the Troutdale City Hall

If you remember riding your bike all the way up “Hungry Hill” (Buxton) without stopping as a rite of passage or Red Miler flying his plane under the railroad bridge, you were part of the village.

In a time when as Bill McGinnis points out “people didn’t even lock their doors.” Some of Bill’s memories of growing up in Troutdale were “smelt eating contests and curbs so high you could not open your car door if you parked too close to the curb.”

Greg Handy said, “We were surrounded by people in the community that cared.” He also remembered that “school was a favorite place to be.” Greg introduced a special guest in attendance, Crystal Bayley, who taught at Troutdale Grade School for many years.

Mary McGinnis Bryson talked of the first (or at least one of the first) televisions in town. “Harold Moffit and Cid Britton had a business that sold electrical appliances. They had a television in the front window, hooked up to a speaker outside and put some make-shift benches on the sidewalk outside the store. The little kids would go down there after school and watch TV until dinner time,” said Mary.

Some of Neil Handy’s favorite memories were also of the smelt runs and his aunt and grandmother selling licenses at the gas station. Neil also thought Trick-or-Treat

was such a good idea, “why do it just once a year?” He and Joe Lunday decided sometime in April or May to go Trick-or-Treating and actually walked away from Skinner’s with some candy.

Neil also said, “Growing up in Troutdale was like being at camp all the time. We had the river, the whole town, and we had the school,” (for basketball and football games). “I wouldn’t trade it for anyone’s childhood,” said Neil. “It was like growing up in a Disney film.”

Other events that were remembered were the dedication of the original Reynolds High School where Mark Hatfield spoke. Les Brown’s and his Band of Renown and Guy Mitchell put on a concert at the dedication party. Red Ball Jets were available at Troutdale General Store and a DC-8 landed at the Troutdale Airport thinking it was Portland International Airport.

Gene Handy recalls fondly, “We were very lucky to have the teachers that we had. We had wonderful teachers first grade all the way through eighth grade. Of course, Jake Hergert sticks out in everybody’s mind.”

Gene also recalled a time when the street lights were turned off and on by a big switch on a power pole outside Doolittle’s store. Ray Doolittle turned on the street lights every night. On one occasion Gene (with the assistance of Larry McGinnis pushing him up the pole) turned out the street lights downtown on a particular Halloween night. It was about an hour later when Wilber Davis, the one-man police department in Troutdale at the time, caught up to them and reminded them that they should never do that again. They never did it again.

Growing up in the village back then meant summer jobs. All members of the panel had worked for Bob & Louise Dix at some point. The Dix’s strawberry and raspberry fields provided employment for almost all of the kids in Troutdale and the surrounding area and the Bob and Louise depended on the kids to get those crops put of the field.

As Greg put it, “We learned at an early age that work was a good thing.”

If you remember the Beaver Creek Bridge washing out with the flood, snow that was really deep back when we had “real” winters or Valberg’s Lumber Yard, you were part of that village.

Yes, back then it took a village and the entire village knew who you were, “so you couldn’t get away with much,” as Mary put it. Your teachers knew your parents. The parents communicated with each other and the values in one household were pretty much the same values in every home all over town. It was a perfect time to grow up and Troutdale was the perfect place. It was safe to be here. We had our own “Mayberry.”

The event was video taped and VHS or DVD copies are available for purchase at the Troutdale Historical Society office at The Depot. The cost is \$15. Call Heather or Sheryl at 503-661-2164 for more information.

### News From Sharon in Maui:

Work continues on the new book of Troutdale History. Many hands are looking over it to dot the I’s and cross the T’s. Since the book is a publication of The Gresham Outlook, it will be priced soon and offered for advance sale (at a reduced price from the after publication cost).



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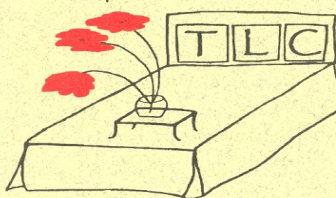
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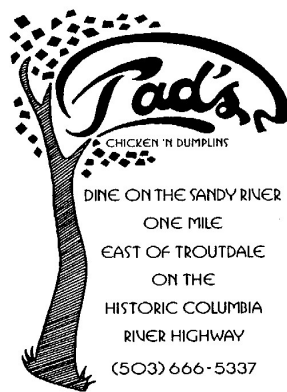
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www.troutdalehistory.org

**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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**Special Thank You to:**

**Scott Cunningham** and **Bob Mitchoff** for being such outstanding Santas.

Please remember our local  
merchants for your Valentine this  
year!