



Newsletter of the Troutdale Historical Society

BYGONE TIMES

August 2013

Upcoming Events

Mark Your Calendars!

September 15

Mystery Dinner.

September 21, 8:30 a.m.

Trek to the Bull Run Watershed.

We need 20-25 people to go. Get your spot on the bus, \$10, by calling the Office.

October Mabel Evans Reunion & Tea at the Harlow House Museum for her former students.

Sunday, November 17

2 p. m. Oral History/
Interview of Korean Veterans.

Saturday, December 7 11 a.m.—4 p.m. Christmas Open House at the Harlow House Museum.

Sept. 21 -- All-day trek to the Bull Run Watershed

Clean your footsies. We have a rare chance on Sept. 21 to take a tour of Portland's famous Bull Run watershed with the Portland Water Bureau. Only 26 people can go, cost is \$10 paid in advance, and you must sign a waiver. (Nell has the forms in the office at the depot.) Departure is at 8:30 a.m. at the barn.

Helen Wand has arranged this jaunt into the "real" backwoods. The Bull Run is off limits for all but authorized visitors in order to preserve the its fine water product. We pack a lunch, clean our shoes (we are not kidding), and be prepared to spend the day. The bus will pick people up at the barn.

The rules follow:

Water Bureau tours offer the unique chance to see firsthand how Portland's drinking water travels from forest to faucet. During the tour, a professional natural resources educator leads participants through the Bull Run Watershed, discussing Portland's drinking water sources and system. All information is intended for a general audience. To prepare for your tour, please: **Dress for the weather and wear comfortable shoes.** Weather in the watershed tends to be cooler and wetter than in the Portland area, so bring extra layers and prepare for rain. Most of your tour will take place inside a vehicle, but you will have opportunities to walk on rough trails and primitive roads. **Wear clean shoes or boots.** To protect water quality, please clean your shoes before the tour. Sometimes shoes can transport fecal matter (from dogs, cats, cows, etc.) or seeds from invasive plants. **Bring enough food and drinks to last the entire day.** Tour schedules do not allow time to stop for provisions. You'll have opportunities to refill your water bottle during the day. **Consider the restroom situation.** Restrooms are about two hours apart. If limited restroom availability presents an issue for you, please contact us. **Bring official photo identification and a completed waiver form.** For security, all participants must sign a liability waiver and provide identification. Participants under 18 years old must have the waiver signed by a guardian, but do not have to provide identification. Consider your health. The tour area is remote. Water Bureau staff carry emergency radios and are trained in first aid; however, cell phones do not work and emergency care can be more than an hour away. If you know you may need medication (including over-the-counter drugs), please bring your own.

Prepare to be awed and proud.

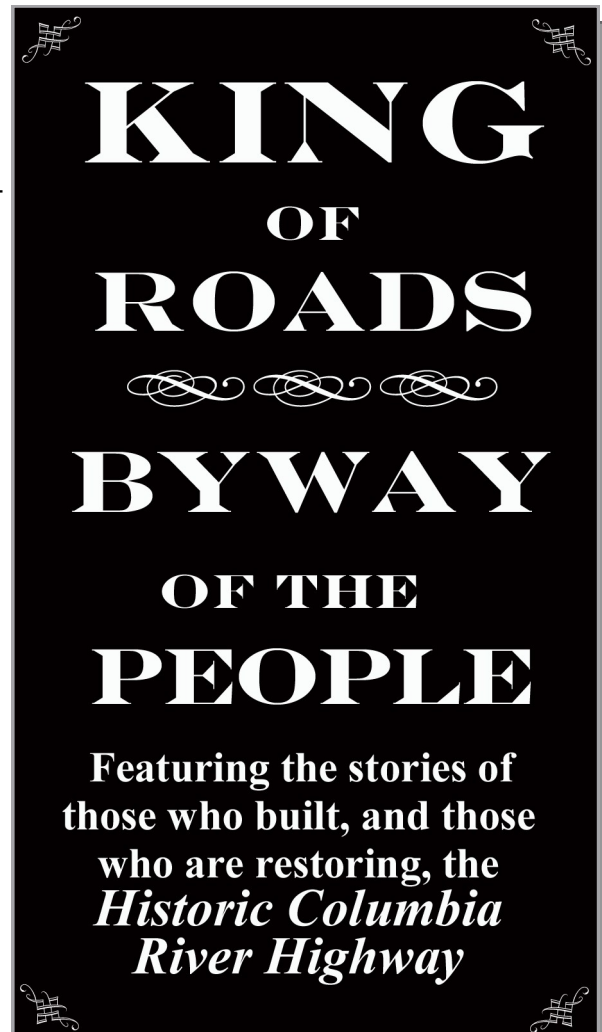
Ten people from Troutdale area have been meeting monthly since 2011 to plan a centennial exhibit, “King of Roads~Byway of the People,” marking the 1916 opening of the Historic Columbia River Highway. Led by Len Otto, this committee gathered local history, first person accounts, and artifacts, all part of building an exhibit on one of the top engineering feats in the world. Together with the exhibit design company, Alchemy of Design, this first-class display at the Troutdale Historical Society’s Barn Museum is heading at full throttle for an opening in the late spring of 2015.

Troutdale lies at the beginning of the historic highway (Highway 30) in eastern Multnomah County. Few local residents or tourists are fully aware of the significance of building the first paved highway in this region or how it linked to Henry Ford and his idea of providing an automobile that any person could afford. Roads were mostly dusty or muddy, with no through routes at the time. Even as late as 1921 there was no such thing as an officially numbered highway.

In 1921 the *Automobile Blue Book* warned those who proposed to drive from Richford, Vermont, to Montreal: “Chains on all four wheels absolutely essential in wet weather.” And it advised tourists in general that “where mountain roads, sandy stretches, and muddy places are to be met with, a shovel with a collapsible handle” might prove very useful.

Thus, when Portland engineering partners Samuel Lancaster and Sam Hill went to Europe in 1908 to tour German and Swiss roadways, bridges and tunnels, they were looking so far into the future, they might have been planning a space mission to the moon. Returning home with big ideas and lofty ambitions, they proposed a highway to parallel the majestic Columbia River Gorge, opening a view that few others, except local farmers, loggers and river travelers, had ever seen.

Hiring these same farmers and loggers to help build this highway was a boon to the local economy both during and after construction. Local workers supplemented incomes by hiring out themselves and their mules to grade roadbeds and spread gravel, but they scoffed at the notion that they would ever be able to afford the vehicles to travel the highway. Henry Ford changed

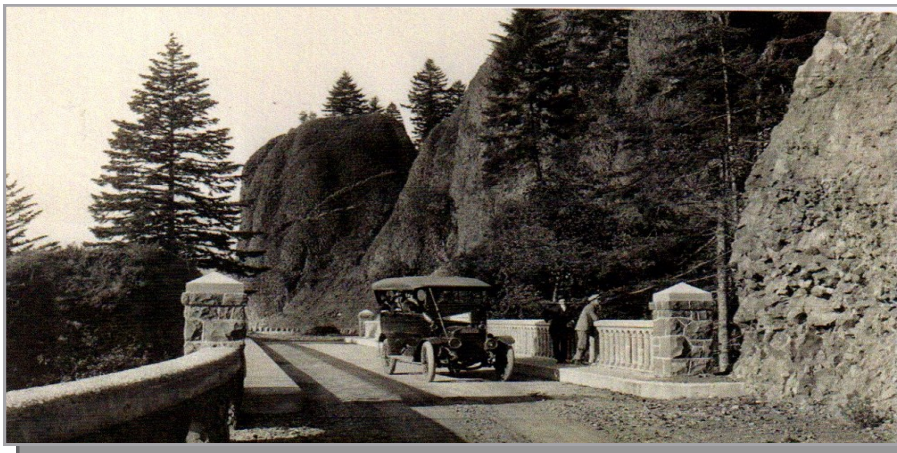


their minds—and their lives. Selling those cars in affordable installment payments, virtually unknown before World War I, made car ownership possible. By 1925 more than 75 percent of all cars, new and old, were sold in “easy payments.”

In 1915 there were fewer than 2 ½ million cars registered in the U.S. By 1920 there were over 9 million; by 1925, nearly 20 million; by 1930, over 26 ½ million.

From 1912 to 1925, more and more roads were paved, as public officials learned that highway surfacing favored everyone, not just the rich.

Garages and filling stations, along with roadhouses, restaurants and auto camps multiplied along highways.



And here sat Troutdale, ready and waiting to greet all those new drivers out to see what the highway was all about.

This is the story our exhibit will tell: America’s love affair with the automobile and Troutdale’s part of the transformation from horse-drawn carriages to motorized vehicles. Our exhibit will take visitors on a trip through history, a journey from duck paths and Indian trails snaking steep cliffs, to a paved highway linking Portland with the towns and cities east of Troutdale.

Come along for the ride.

We need your support and your talent. If you have a hobby, skill or urge to participate in a celebration of history, please volunteer. When we open the doors to this exhibit, you can proudly say, “I helped create this!” **For information on sharing this experience, please contact Nell Si-mien, our executive director of the Troutdale Historical Society office, or Len Otto at 503-663-0794.**

Remembering Clarence Mershon: To date we have received ????????? In donations in memory of Highway Exhibit Committee Member Clarence Mershon. Our exhibit will be dedicated to him.

Dam It, Anyway!

Beginning in 1913, a group of sportsmen, mostly members of the Troutdale Rod and Gun Club, decided that fish runs, particularly smelt runs, in the Sandy River could be improved by forcing the river into a single channel. Their solution was to build a small dam to block the easternmost branch of the river. Construction of a 750-foot dam in 1931 sent the entire flow of the river into the westernmost branch, called The Little Sandy, regarded today as the mouth of the river. The boulder and piling dam near the mouth of the Sandy River did deepen the channel, at least temporarily, and was regarded as a success.

Modern man, however, has other ideas. Nature is fine the way it is and was, and fish runs, including smelt runs, need support, not meddling. After numerous public hearings and opportunities for input, various governmental bodies concluded that removal of the historic dam at the mouth of the Sandy was in the best interests of fish and man. Construction, or rather deconstruction, began at the end of July, this time supervised by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Once completed, the Sandy River will be returned to its historical configuration with a pair of mouths and a "braided" set of channels. These will provide rearing and resting places for salmon and steelhead juveniles and adults. The eight decades past work by locals to improve fish runs will be removed, ironically, to improve fish runs.



Smelt are notoriously fickle creatures, though, and will return to the Sandy River when and if the whim moves them.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and partners will host a celebration Aug. 15, 1-2 p.m., with interpretive walks from 5 to 8 p.m.

Summerfest 2013

Troutdale Historical Society is "Grand Marshal"

It takes a lot of people to have Summerfest. Thanks to our volunteers for the parade: Len Otto, Paula Goldie, Penny Labberton, Elaine Davis,



Cathy Peetz (our three old-fashioned girls); Sharon Nesbit and Diane Castillo-White, broadcasting for Metro-East TV; Mario Ayala driving THS family members of the year (in memory of Clarence Mershon).



A big thanks goes out to Bess Wills and Gresham Ford for their support of the Troutdale Historical Society. Jim Glenn, Joanne Losinger, Karen Jordan (and her quilt) and Helen Wand, at



the Harlow House, and Nell Simien holding the fort at the Depot. (The vintage Model T owned by Jim Davis (arranged by Nell Simien & the Chamber), won the John Harlow prize for best parade entry overall.



Sounds of 1950s in Wood Village — Part One.

By the mid 1950s the streets of Wood Village were alive with the sound of music. And I'm not talking about the Von Trapp family. Bill Haley and the Comets started it all, and when Elvis entered the building, rock and roll was here to stay.

The houses in the Village were built so close together I figure the town was originally meant to be a condominium project that somehow went awry. Every house had a record player, but I don't think anybody had air conditioning. Not even a small window banger, so on hot summer evenings the windows and doors were opened to take advantage of that lovely east wind.



Each family had one car and it was parked in the driveway or garage. So with all that extra space, the streets were the obvious choice as everybody's favorite playground. From little girls hop-scotching and riding those annoying metal-wheeled roller skates and older girls talking, giggling and scheming to convince one boy or another to do something silly while we were playing some improvised game of baseball. Good thing the windows were open. And, of course, there was always somebody inside most of the houses playing what is now called "that old time rock and roll."

The beauty of that music was in the ear of the beholder, I suppose. My Mom didn't mind it so much as long as we didn't play the same record over and over, or too loud. My Dad didn't want it played at all when he was home. For whatever reason, I gravitated towards songs like, "One-eyed, one-horned, flying purple people eater" and "my friend the witch doctor." I'm not sure what Ricky Nelson was up to when he came along bragging about that hole in his bucket. And who didn't like it when Brenda Lee had us all "rock'n around the Christmas tree"? Even my Grandma in North Dakota had to like that one. Our family had a record player that was smaller than the kitchen bread box and only played 45-rpm records. When my brother Tommy and I found out what 45-rpm meant, we naturally had to test it. One of us would watch and count a spitball placed on the turntable while the other did the timekeeping. Neither one of us could confirm the 45 revolutions because somewhere around 35, the one counting would get dizzy as a pet coon and fall out of the chair.

With the record players and televisions rapidly becoming the central attractions of the entertainment world, the radio could still get its licks in. On Thursday evenings when The William Tell Overture came roaring out of the open windows and doors, the streets would be evacuated in an instant. The Lone Ranger was on the radio and could not to be ignored by any red-blooded Villager. We frantically scurried to our homes for the latest adventures of that masked man. **To be continued in next issue Part Two.**

Mabel Evans: We are planning a Harlow House reception to gather the piano students of Mabel Evans. If you were one of the kids who learned the keyboard at the Harlow House under her tutelage, please call our office, 503-661-2164, or email Helen Wand at hfwand@comcast.net.



YUMMMM—This month we welcome “j gelati” to the Troutdale Historical Society’s family of sponsors. “j gelati” is located at 2467 SW Cherry Park, Troutdale, (next to Safeway). Next time you are in the Cherry Park Plaza stop in and say hi to Glen & Sally Mackey , better yet try some of their 14 tasty flavors of Italian Ice and Frozen soft custard.

Old Multnomah County Jail At Edgefield

Sharon Nesbit will lead a tour of the old Multnomah County Jail at Edgefield at 2 p. m, Saturday Oct. 5. This is limited to 20 people, each willing to pay \$100 for the chance to see the inside of the 50 year -old-jail and a peek at the some of the stuff stored there. (Actually you go to jail free -- getting out that will cost you \$100 (a donation to the society's historic highway exhibit.) Afterward, you get a beer.

Two people are already signed up. If you want to be go we need your check, name and contact details. (If the tour fills up we will return your check.) Information: Sharon Nesbit, snesbit@aol.com.

In Memory: Vaden Callister

Vaden Callister died May 6, just 10 days shy of his 86th birthday on May 16. A long time resident of Jackson Park Road, he and his wife, Jo Stone Callister, raised their family along the Sandy River. He was raised on Callister Road in SE Chresam, graduated from Gresham High in 1945, served two years in Korea and worked 35 years for Portland General Electric. In retirement they lived in Damascus. Vaden was an outdoorsman, through and through. He is buried at Douglass Cemetery.

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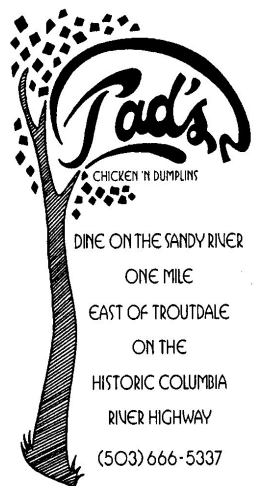
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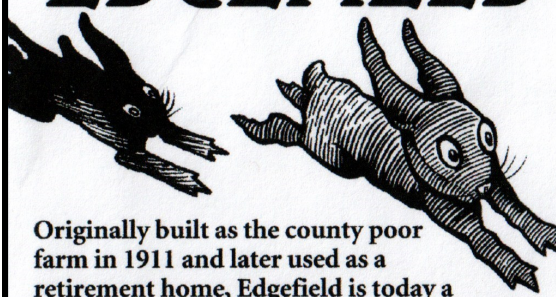
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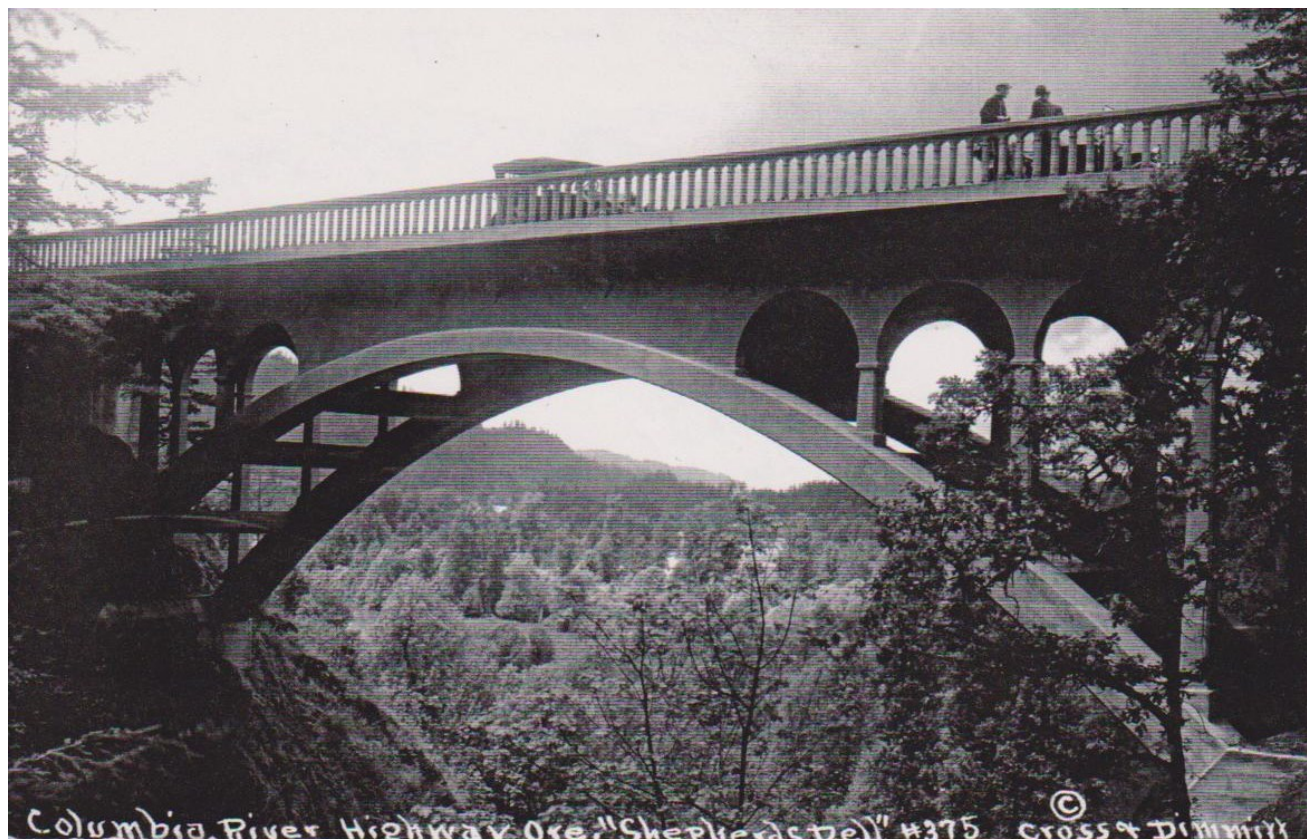
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Troutdale Historical Society
219 E Hist. Col Riv. Hwy.
Troutdale, OR 97060
www.troutdalehistory.org
503-661-2164

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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