

Silverton Country Historical Society

Museum and Office 428 South Water Street



The Palace Theater

Continuing with our series of stories about Silverton 100 years ago, this article is taken from the Silvertonian Appeal, April 15, 1910.

A New Play House Silverton Opera House to be Used as a Moving Picture Entertainment.

L.J Adams is having the opera house remodeled and put into shape for using a moving picture machine. It is Mr. Adams' intention to give to the public as good service as can be seen in Portland, New York or any other city. He has made arrangements with the Laemmle Film Co. of Portland to furnish four changes per week, 3000 feet of film to be used each night. The screen is large enough to show a picture 12 by 16 feet if desired, which is much larger than pictures seen in a great many places of this kind.

Mr. Adams has held this matter in contemplation for some time and has thoroughly investigated every detail pertaining to it. He is now in a position to know just what is required for the installation of the necessary equipment, and is sparing no expense to make the undertaking a success.

The public is invited to be present at the grand opening of this new place of amusement Sunday evening, April 17. Three reels will be used instead of two, as is sometimes the case in such places, using 3000 feet of film during each performance. The price of admission is 10 cents.

This new arrangement will in no wise interfere with the theatre. The motion pictures will be dispensed with at any and all times to accommodate plays billed or the Opera House.

We predict a splendid degree of success for Mr. Adams in his new enterprise and feel safe in assuring just compensation to all who patronize his house.



Ed. Note: The Silverton Opera House was built in 1905 by Edward Porter and Louis Adams and eventually consisted of a ballroom holding around 60 people. Storefronts lined the length of North Water Street as well as along Oak Street. The opera room was 65 x 75 feet with a balcony and gallery and box seats. The stage was 25 x 36 feet and had all the up to date curtains and scenery, etc. A room under the stage was used for socials and other entertainment. The stage and theater part were located more in the north end, but the entrance was always from Oak Street. The building was dedicated with a grand ball in September of 1905.

The other theater in town, the Gem, was built in 1914 and was located across the street, where the Red Bench is now, on property that was once owned in the 1860's and '70's by Stephen Price, who was married to Polly Coon. (Polly Coon was responsible for the platting of the town.) Movies were shown there as well, but sometime prior to 1922 its operations were moved to the Opera House.

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Porter sold his share of the Opera House to Adams in 1910 and in 1925 his son Alfred Adams bought it and named the building the Palace Theater. The family owned it for many decades.

In April of 1935 fire destroyed the entire Opera House building along with several businesses on both Water and Oak streets, with estimates of up to \$100,000 in damages. Alfred Adams and his wife Esther



The Day After the Opera House Fire

lived in apartments over the theater and narrowly escaped out a second story window. More than 13,000 feet of film in the projection booth caused explosions helping to spread the fire. The picture being shown was "West Point of the Air" starring Wallace Beery. The safe in the Palace was the one Coolidge and McClaine brought to Silverton in 1880, but it was left ajar so many documents that were inside were lost. The reflection of the fire in the sky was supposedly seen as far away as Portland.

The Palace Theatre was in the process of being remodeled at the time of the fire and re-opened in August that year with 500 seats and the latest improved sound equipment, a modern ventilation system and "the most comfortable seats" available.

The "new" Palace Theater closed briefly in July/August 2002 to fix its deteriorating roof and ceiling that endangered the safety of theater patrons. New carpeting and new seats were also installed at that time.

Chris Schwab

Article from the April 15, 1910 Silvertonian Appeal

All theatergoers who desire to see a first class entertainment should attend the Cousin Kate Company at Opera House Tuesday evening May 12, 1910. This is a guaranteed attraction and one of the best ever staged in Silverton. Mr. Adams guarantees this to be first class in every respect and invites the public to attend. Tickets now on sale at the Opera House office Admission \$1.00, 75, 50 and 35.

April Member Program Bill Predeek – Proposed Mt. Angel Historical Society Monday, April 19, 2010 – 7:00 pm Silverton Museum

Join us at the museum as Bill Predeek, one of the organizers of the Mt. Angel Historical Society, updates us on their planning process. This should bring back memories for those of us who can recall SCHS's early days!

Since last summer, a core group including Bill, Brother Cyril from the Abbey, Sister Alberta from the convent, Gary Edwards, and Nancy Bochsler have been holding meetings to gather support for the project. You may also have seen some of their displays of historic Mt. Angel pictures at various events.

Let's share our support, ideas and interest with Bill at our April Member Program. If anyone has any questions, they can contact Bill at 503-845-2464 or predeek@mtangel.net or the SCHS Museum at 503-87-7070 or silverton.museum@live.com.

Chris Schwab

SCHS Search for Lover of History

Does your idea of a fun time involve burying your nose in a 100-year old newspaper, searching out little gems of stories about the lives and times of our ancestors? Do you feel compelled to slip old photographs into protective plastic sleeves and tuck quilts into acid free tissue paper? Are you eager to learn more about the history of Silverton by introducing people to the likes of Homer Davenport, June Drake, the Coolidges, the Allens, Polly Crandall Coon and others? Are you thinking to yourself that you are finally ready to step up your involvement in the Historical Society to a new level?

Well, have we got the “job” for you!

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, after 10-plus years, our fantastic volunteer Curator, Carolyn Hutton, has expressed an interest in stepping down as Head Curator for the SCHS Museum at the end of this year. We are of course heartsick at this news, but, as most of us are acquainted with the phenomenon of burnout ourselves, we understand. So—the search is on. We know there is someone out there who loves Silverton, who appreciates its history, and who would be willing to take on a more active role in making sure this history is saved for future generations.

Trust me – you would not be working by yourself. Carolyn has put together a curatorial committee that is second to none: a group of volunteers willing to serve as museum hosts, to help with processing new donations, to lead tours; a bunch of people who thrive on research projects, setting up displays and just plain talking “Silverton.” You can’t buy a staff like that.

The position of Curator will appeal to someone who likes order and detail, but at the same time, someone who relishes the unusual, the unpredictable. An afternoon could be spent marking recent donations with accession information, the next morning you could be sharing the excitement of a group of third graders as they view the stump of the ancient oak tree for the first time, and then on the weekend, June Drake’s granddaughter could stop in seeking information about her family. You just never know.....

If this sounds like a venture you could be interested in and you have questions, call us at the museum: 503-873-7070 or send an e-mail to silverton.museum@live.com. Take us up on this offer early and get the benefit of Carolyn’s vast experience as she trains you for the ride of your life!

Chris Schwab



How to have fun as curator!

Another Covered Bridge Story

Just when I think I've been through every nook, cranny, drawer and shelf here at the museum; no surprises left (except those I've forgotten about!)...Oh Sweet Joy....I find another one. It's amazing really, not to mention just plain darn fun!

To begin with: Jeff Brekus' parents moved to town and bought the old Allen place down on Pine Street. Dewey Allen had passed away and the house still had lots of stuff that he had collected over the years. The Brekus' gathered it all up, brought it down to the museum and tucked/crammed it all into a corner of the basement. Dewey had saved everything. That could be a story all by itself but I want to tell you about the mystery that unfolded when, rearranging some of Dewey's 'stuff', I happened on a painting of a covered bridge.

Now, we're all partial to covered bridges and I pulled it out into the light of day to look for the painter's name. The bridge was titled Schlador Bridge. The first question that came to mind was: where was the Schlador Bridge? The next question was: who painted it? The name of the artist wasn't hard to read, but puzzling: P u s c l e? So I flipped it over, and there, written on the back, was the story which became the mystery:

"This picture is painted for the office of the Silverton Appeal Tribune.

Behind this canvas is an issue of Appeal of Nov 12 – 1953.

Up to this time I have put about twenty five issues of the Appeal behind the canvas of my paintings and those issues will show up some day, maybe fifty or hundred years from now as the pictures fall to pieces.

These bridges will soon be a history and I thought it would be nice to have some pictures in a public office for the future. They will be of little value to us 50 years from now but it won't hurt the office.

In all there are some over one hundred pictures with the Oregon Statesman and Appeal issues.

You'll find the name PUSCLE on all my paintings. Puscle is my wife's nickname.

I'm not looking for any publicity, don't want it at all. You can write all you want about the pictures, but don't mention my name Please.

I lived in Silverton from Jan 1, 1916 to July 1, 1941. Then I moved to Salem. I like Salem but I love Silverton. Prettiest town this side the Miss. River in the U.S.A.

I was born in a sod house 16 miles S.E. of Redfield S.D. on bank of the James River –
Nov. 8 – 1886.

Yours Very Truly,

I won't _____ sign my name.

Painted at 1450 N.E. 19th St. Salem, Oregon"

And that's where he lost his desire for anonymity: to the advances of record-keeping. Or perhaps he knew the libraries of the future would have directories of names and addresses, cross-referenced, so that someone with determination, like Robin Anderson, could go to the State Library and learn who lived at 1450 NE 19th Street in the 1950's. Robin is our go-to-person for sleuthing through whatever records she can find, to track down the answer to the question, whatever it might be. Thanks, Robin.

The painting will be hung in the depot along side the other painting of a covered bridge by the same artist, donated to us last year from Pauline (Mrs. Les) Anderson. I wonder what issue of what paper is under that canvas?



Carolyn Hutton



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A Token of Affection



for you on Mother's Day

Thank you to our new and
 renewing members!!!

Bo Larsen
 The Gordon House
 Marcella Gentzkow
 Duane and Paulette Olson
 Edward "Jack" Geer
 Marilyn Frick
 Ray and Kathy Hunter
 Pete Tolmasoff

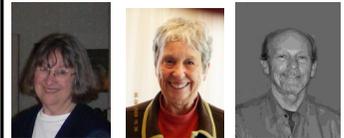
And thank you for your
 donations:

John and Melinda Bukey

Please Renew!

Check this newsletter for your
 renewal notice and send your
 payment in as soon as
 possible. Thank you.

Carolyn Chris Larry



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