

Silverton Country Historical Society

Museum and Office 428 South Water Street



SCHS Annual Meeting January 21, 2012—Silverton Grange

This year's annual meeting was held at the Silverton Grange. For the afternoon's program, Gus Frederick told us some history of the Grange in Oregon and Silverton, and how the Grange movement is evolving for the future. Gus also showed the digitally restored movie featuring the Silverton High School Vocational Agriculture program from the 1920's. The original 24-minute film was originally shot between 1927 and 1929 by Warren Crabtree, SHS Vocational Agriculture teacher, to highlight Silverton High School's Smith-Hughes Vocational Agriculture Program, a federally funded project designed to instruct rural students in the latest modern agricultural techniques. A short slide show biography of Warren Crabtree followed.

The people of the Grange were excellent hosts and the meeting and program were well-attended. A business meeting was also held with the newly elected officers as follows:

Norman English—President
Ray Hunter—Past President
Tracy Duerst—Treasurer
Chris Schwab—Secretary

Jan Wolfard Long—Curator
Ruth Kaser—Board Member
Marsha Worthen—Board Member

These amazing volunteers join Kathy Hunter, Membership Coordinator, Kay LaLone, Board Member and Molly Murphy, Board Member. The position of Vice-President remains vacant. If you are interested, PLEASE give us a call at the museum: 873-7070.



Thank you!!

As we begin this new year, thank you, thank you, thank you, to all our loyal members and generous donors. We cannot expect to meet the goals outlined in our mission statement without your continued support. **You** help us gather and preserve and protect the pieces of Silverton history—the artifacts, the photos, the stories; **you** make it possible for us to be available to those wanting to research their families, their homes, their way of life; **you** are the reason we can host the school tours and have programs to educate the public about the history of Silverton Country.

You are the Silverton Country Historical Society!

This year, we would like to feature more offerings from our membership in our periodic newsletter. For February, we are pleased to include a "real-life mystery" piece written by Fred A. Parkinson.

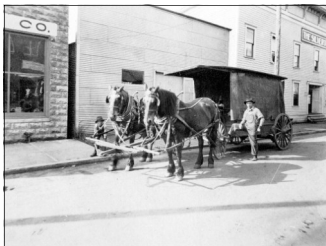
The Silverton Hotel

In 1955, when I was two years old, I moved to Silverton with my family. My Dad bought Silverton Drug Company from Victor Sather and operated the store at 210 Oak Street for over forty years.

Last summer, anticipating the release of the Images of America, "Silverton" book by Gus Frederick, I happened to be perusing the local history section at the Silver Falls Library. I came across a master's thesis from the University of Oregon entitled "Silverton: the Morphology of an Oregon Town" by Philip Duncan McEachern. This is an extremely interesting study and is also available for viewing at the museum. It deals with the geography of Silverton from the early days through the 1970's. He examines how the town was originally platted and how it grew geographically through the years. Included in this thesis is a case study of the downtown core area that details building density and how eventually the density decreased as businesses moved to so-called "fringe" areas of town, away from the downtown core. There are several maps included in the thesis detailing this change over the years. Due to a family interest, I naturally looked for the location of Silverton Drug on Oak Street. There is a notation on the 1931 map for a building, removed prior to 1931, called the Silverton Hotel. This building appeared to have been located on the same site as Silverton Drug at 210 Oak Street. I mentioned this a few days later while ruminating with a small group out on the patio. There seemed to be some skepticism to my claim. Some thought that I was confusing the 210 Oak St location with the old apartments on the southwest corner of Second and Oak that had once been part of the Anderson Hotel. I mentioned that the maps in the thesis were based on Sanborn Maps, a well known resource insurance companies used in underwriting fire insurance policies. I was told that they had probably made a mistake on the map.



I decided I would attempt to find the real history of the elusive Silverton Hotel on Oak Street. Did it really occupy the current 210 Oak Street location at one time?



I don't have a background in research, but I do have an interest in Silverton history. Around this time, Gus's book came out and I bought a copy. Pictured on page 74 is an image of a transfer wagon in 1919. There is a building in the background of the photo with a sign saying "The Silverton", as the Silverton Hotel was known at the time. This was my first clue! I felt like I could be on to something. The building looked like it would be wide enough to fill the width of the lot occupied by Silverton Drug. I had no idea where the picture was taken as there was no specific location information included in the photo's caption.

Days later I went to the museum to investigate further. I explained my mystery to Dolores Blust and her husband, Ken. They suggested I look for the Silverton Hotel in some old Silverton phone directories. I looked through a few directories and finally found an entry in the September, 1921 edition for the Silverton Hotel..... at 207 Oak St! I was immediately encouraged. The same entry was in the April, 1922 phone book, but, curiously, there was no entry in the August, 1923 edition. I later realized the 207 Oak street number would put it across the street from the current 210 Oak St. This was a modest setback in my quest, but at least I had **some** confirmation that the Silverton Hotel existed in the general area I thought it had. I continued to search for the answer.

I felt like those people on the "History Detectives" show, except I didn't have an artifact to research, unless you consider a building that has been gone for close to ninety years to be an artifact.

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I researched this location further by returning to the museum. During the visit Marsha Worthen and Chris Schwab provided me with various documents and photos to examine. These small snippets of history ultimately included a half page ad from the July 30, 1954 Appeal-Tribune. This ad, commemorating the Silverton Centennial celebration, featured the Silverton Hotel. The piece was sponsored by Victor Sather, who owned Silverton Drug at the time. This was an especially significant find for me as my Dad would purchase Silverton Drug from the Sathers within a year.

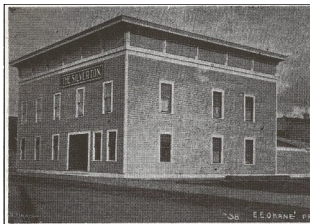


After a three paragraph greeting from Victor and his wife, Velda, the ad goes on to read **“The Silverton Drug store is located on the site of an old and favorably known early hotel, The Silverton, which was destroyed by fire in 1922.”** This was the first evidence I had that my theory of the hotel’s location was correct. It was also the first I’d seen that my elusive hotel had

burned down. It burned spectacularly in the early morning hours of August 25, 1922. The cause of the fire was never officially determined.

I finally had the answer to my mystery! However, there was no citation or documentation that proved beyond a doubt that the old hotel stood on the site of Silverton Drug. There were certainly people alive in 1954 who had been around in 1922, but what if anecdotal memories of the hotel were wrong? Remember, I still had the problem of the hotel’s address placed on the wrong side of the street to consider. I had to keep looking for the definitive solution.

Finally Chris brought out a photo that showed the Silverton Hotel on fire, obviously on the same side of the street as Silverton Drug. Unfortunately the picture was very dark and the building looked like it could be on the corner of North Water and Oak Streets instead of in the middle of the block where I thought it should be. Chris scanned the photo for me and I took it home on my thumb drive. It was only after I viewed the image on my large computer monitor that I noticed, to the right of the burning building, the very distinctive, elliptically shaped, awning of the



building on the corner that once housed Silverton’s first service station. This was the final piece needed to definitively prove that “The Silverton” was, in fact, located on the exact site of Silverton Drug. I had solved the mystery, more for myself than for anyone else. I didn’t know when I started the hunt if I would find the answer I sought, but I had the time and the desire to try. It was certainly worth the effort.



As with such endeavors, a solution to one mystery sometimes leads to new, more perplexing, mysteries. One such unknown, perhaps partially solved, concerns the origins of the Silverton Hotel building itself. In another case, the question concerning the Silverton Hotel’s “odd” street number, appearing on the current “even” numbered side of the street is certainly puzzling. By examining old phone directories and looking through old copies of the Silverton Appeal-Tribune, I have concluded that sometime between 1936 and 1938 the street numbers for the generally east-west running streets had, in fact, changed to the opposite side, at least in the central business core area. To illustrate this anomaly in the street numbers, I suggest you drive down West Hill on Main Street toward downtown, noticing the house numbers to the right (south) side of the street. After crossing the bridge into downtown, continue to notice the addresses to the right (south) side of the street. What do you see?

Fred A. Parkinson



Willamette Women: Our History is Our Strength
January 20 through March 10, 2012 at
Willamette Heritage Center at Mission Mill
The Silverton Historical Society will be participating
again this year. Come see us!



Exhibit coordinator Molly Murphy and husband, Kevin, working on SCHS's display.



The finished display features stories of the lives of some fascinating Silverton women: Flora Hoblitt, Zetta Schlador, Polly Crandall Coon Price, Hannah Olson, Mildred Thayer, Virginia Brown Stephens, Eva Coolidge, and Musa Geer.



Retired SCHS Curator, Carolyn Hutton and Molly Murphy at the reception held at the opening of Willamette Women.

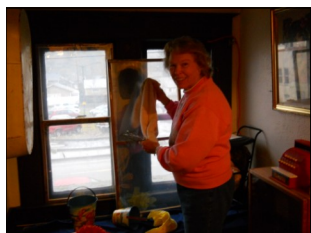


In keeping with the focus on area women and Silverton women in particular, the main display in the living room at the museum is highlighting objects from the lives of the women who helped mold Silverton....from the famous to the everyday, from the ordinary to the elegant. Unfortunately, the news-letter photos can't do the artifacts proper justice....please try to come view them in person. The Museum is open Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m.



What's Going On At the Museum?

Cleaning Day, January 24th.....



Looking like they are having more fun than they really were: Kathy Hunter, Kay LaLone, Ruth Kaser and Nellie Graves (Left-Right)

Your Museum—A New Look!

New Signs....



New Steps.....



Ray Hunter, Gary Ohren and Norm English install the new porch steps.

The new sign crew:
Wade and Robin Anderson,
Ray Hunter, Norm English,
Tom Worthen.

Volunteer of the Year for 2011

Robin Anderson

Always dependable and a fierce fan of Silverton history, or for that matter, any history, Robin can be counted on to help with the latest SCHS project....that is, if she and husband Wade aren't traveling cross country to visit relatives or participate in country or renaissance fairs. Robin is our research guru....a member of Ancestry Detectives, the local genealogy group, she is the first to head to the library microfiche machine to track down



clues on the history of some Silverton person or interesting story. She never shows up at the Tuesday work sessions without a book or article that she thinks will be of interest to us. Stepping in when curator Carolyn Hutton retired, last year, Robin made sure our donation records were kept up to date,,,but to clarify that she had no desire to actually take on the curator's job, she once turned in a report from

".....the part-time, temporary, assistant volunteer to the volunteer curator." Robin dislikes the limelight...she is one of those people who prefers to stay in the back-ground. She does what she does because she likes it, not for any recognition. But Robin...just this once. Please let us put you in the spot light! Thank You!

Chris Schwab

....We're Open!



A new lightweight lawn sign replaces the very heavy wooden "OPEN" sign.

Thank you, Fred Parkinson, for all your computer help and for getting the laptop computer on-line!
Thank you, Robin for fixing the upstairs telephone extension!



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THE DAVENPORT PROJECT

Davenport



1867 - 1912

Homer Davenport Community Festival Theme for 2012

Over the course of the next year, the Davenport Project will present a series of lectures, exhibits and general fun, leading up to Silverton's annual Homer Davenport Community Festival, starting the first Friday in August, 2012. The goals of the Project are straightforward:

To honor the memory of this pioneering Oregonian cartoonist, lecturer and author, during the centennial of his passing, as the RMS Titanic's last victim, in 1912.

For more information:
Davenportport.LiberalUniversity.org

Your S.C.H.S. Board

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Tracy Duerst	Treasurer
Jan Long	Curator
Kathy Hunter	Membership
Molly Murphy	
Marsha Worthen	
Kay LaLone	
Ruth Kaser	

If you received an overdue notice with your newsletter, we appreciate your prompt response.

Thank you!

Thank you to our new and renewing members—

Jeff and Cindy Lampa

Nellie Graves

Fred and Ruth Kaser

Gary and Nancy Ohren

Dawn Juliano

Rory Nichols

Kathy Pallister

Carolyn Hutton

Judy Lowery

Andy and Lou Nelson

Daniel Atkinson

Gary and Joyce Wolfard

And **Thank You** to these generous donors!

Phyllis Haberly Burson

Nellie Graves

Carolyn Hutton