

Silverton Country Historical Society

Museum and Office 428 South Water Street



Vesper Geer (1917-2010): A New Archival Documentary By Mike Turner

Vesper Geer was the 4th generation owner of the Geer homestead in Salem, the oldest frame-built house in Oregon to remain in the same family. Vesper was born in the kitchen of that old house in 1917, and passed away there on New Year's Eve, 2010. And in those 93 years, we can see the 20th century pass through the photographs, letters, and journals of an ordinary woman who always knew where home was.

When Vesper was little, she got to listen to her great uncle tell what it was like crossing the Oregon Trail. It's no wonder that she never lost an appreciation for stories! She came to believe that passing on one's life story is an "obligation... written, narrated around a cozy fireplace on a winter evening, recorded or pictured with subtitles... just don't take it all to your grave with you. What good is done by taking it with you?" In a world that becomes increasingly disconnected and difficult to navigate, these stories give roots to future generations.

Making a full-length documentary film of Vesper's life story has been a year-long adventure into the past. Though her home was here in Oregon, she followed the thread of her life wherever it took her—through marriages and war, on the farm where she grew up or in an RV visiting every state of the union, and abroad. My challenge as a filmmaker to capture, on purpose, the warmth and honesty that my mom captured by chance in our family home movies—and to make the audience feel like they are a part of the family too. I'm excited to bring you, for a little while, into the Geer family, and show you a life well lived.

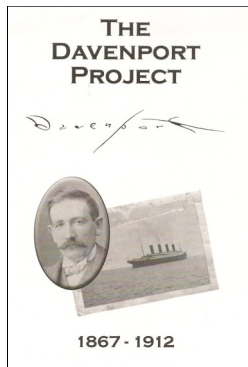
Mike Turner



More about filmmaker, Michael Turner, the documentarian-in-residence at GeerCrest Farm. Mike says, "My interest in home movies has lead me all over the country, but I actually arrived at GeerCrest to take a break from making movies, and just farm. Little did I know there was a project waiting for me in the boxes of old photographs, journals, and letters scattered around the old house that belonged to Vesper Geer. Jim and Erika, the 5th-generation owners of the farm, wanted to commission a biographical documentary of her, and the more I looked into the material, the more the story of her life pulled me in. This is my first full-length movie; my short movie, "A Salad," won Best Documentary at the Teeny Tiny Film Festival."

Join us at 2:00 PM, Saturday April 28th, 2012, at the Palace Theater in Silverton for the community premier of this documentary. Filmmaker in attendance!

The Davenport Project



Homer Davenport Community Festival — 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. (More info on this below...read on!)

For more information: Davenportport.LiberalUniversity.org

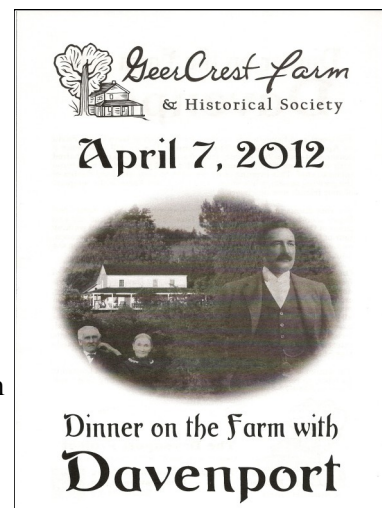
More Homer.....

Dinner on the Farm With Davenport

GeerCrest Farm invites you to join the Farm family for their Spring Farm Dinner on Saturday, April 7, 2012, 6:00 pm til 9:00 pm. Guests will experience a seasonal, 4-course feast made from farm fresh fare, skillfully paired with wines from East Willamette Valley, and prepared by a featured regional chef.

That evening GeerCrest will also feature a talk by Gus Frederick, GeerCrest Board member and local Historian, on the life and times of Oregon Cartoonist Homer Davenport, as well as the contributions to pioneer Oregon, by his Geer and Davenport relatives. An optional walking tour of Davenport's Silverton will precede the dinner in the afternoon, and will be conducted by Frederick. There is no extra charge for the tour.

One hundred years ago this May, the RMS Titanic's last victim died from pneumonia. W.R. Hearst cartoonist Homer Davenport caught his death after illustrating the survivors' tragic tale. An incredibly lucky, creative and productive life was cut short. Caricaturist, author, Arabian horse breeder and out-spoken freethinking spiritualist, he defied all expectations. The Davenport Project was created to stimulate interest in this unique Oregonian, one of the most successful artists this State has ever produced. Go to <http://davenport.liberalunivesity.org> for more information.



The cost of the dinner and accompanying beverages for the evening is \$60. Seating is limited to 30 people, so make your reservations now by calling GeerCrest Farm at **503-873-3406**.

And More Homer.....

A Stumptown Story—Homer Who? A Presentation on the life and times of Homer Davenport by Gus Frederick.

On April 24th at the Jack London Bar located at 529 SW 4th Ave. in Portland (21 or older only), Gus Frederick will talk about Silverton's Homer Davenport. One hundred years ago this May, W.R. Hearst cartoonist Homer Davenport died from pneumonia, which he contracted while covering the sinking of the RMS Titanic. He is in effect, the last victim of this terrible tragedy. Caricaturist, author, Arabian horse breeder and out-spoken freethinking spiritualist.....Homer Davenport was one of this state's most outstanding citizens. This event begins at 7:30 p.m. and is free to the public. For more information go to Davenport.LiberalUniversity.org

SCHS Dime Toss Fundraiser Coming Up!

Summer will be soon here with all its fun events and of course, the Historical Society's Dime Toss will be there, too. We'll set up at the Homer Davenport Community Festival and at the Strawberry Festival, weather allowing.

As you know our game booth invites everyone to try throwing dimes inside containers, just as carnival games do. If it stays there and doesn't bounce out, they've won it and can take it home. So, we need containers, lots of 'em. That's where you, your neighbors and your relatives can help. Please check your cupboards throughout the house and garage for attractive containers someone will want to win, bag them up and bring them in. Hit some yard sales or Goodwill and maybe even spend a couple of dollars on containers. We can use vases, cups, flower pots, deep bowls, drinking glasses.....we've even had



several punch bowls in the past. You can leave your donations at the museum on Tuesdays, between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. or weekends when we're open from 1-4 p.m., or put them on my porch at 211 Welch Street in Silverton. It's helpful if you put your name on the bag so I can thank you. Dime Toss earnings go toward improvements outside the museum. I appreciate everyone helping with this fundraiser. And please let me know if you would be willing to help share the fun by helping at the booth during the festivals. Give me a call at 503-873-0159.

Kathy Hunter, Chair

SCHS in the Community

We love it when local businesses take the opportunity to highlight Silverton history in their offices or work areas. This week we are featuring the medical office of Dr. Michael Gabe on Welch Street. They have enlarged some photographs of early Silverton and added them to the décor of the waiting room. Thank you, Dr. Gabe, for sharing!



Just as we were going to "press" with this issue of the newsletter, it was discovered that two highly historical watches (once belonging to Homer Davenport and to W.L. McGinnis, Manager of Silverton Red Sox baseball team and the old Silver Falls Timber Company) have been discovered as missing from the museum. A police report has been filed, some pawn shops have been contacted, there will be a story in next week's Silverton Appeal and the next issue of Our Town. We are in the process of reviewing our security system and our security measures and the board is considering offering a reward. Please call the museum at 503-873-7070, or SCHS President, Norm English at 503-873-8101 or any SCHS Board Member if you have any information that could be of use in finding these objects.





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This cartoon was recently donated to the museum. The caption says, "Sale of the Great Blow Hole. Silverton Oregon 1948."

Anybody know anything about it? Who might have drawn it or what it is about?

Call us at 503-873-7070.

Your S.C.H.S. Board

Norm English	President
Ray Hunter	Past-Pres.
Vacant	Vice-Pres.
Chris Schwab	Secretary
Tracy Duerst	Treasurer
Jan Long	Curator
Kathy Hunter	Membership
Molly Murphy	
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Kay LaLone	
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Thank you to our new and renewing members—

Joan Sprug	Steve, Amy and Grace Payton	Pete Tolmasoff Family
Ernie Hento	Jack and Lurlyn Long	Larry Thomas
Dorothy Ramig	Aileen Conrad	Bob and Donna Eberle
Chris Schwab	Larry and Molly Romine	MiniStorall
Frances Holloway	Susan Beale	

And **Thank You** to Tom and Barbara Pelett for your generous donation.

The value of your support cannot be adequately measured.

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

Thank you!