

Silverton Country Historical Society

Museum and Office 428 South Water Street



This month's featured article is by Fred Parkinson who is sharing his memories of growing up in Silverton and the museum's home—the Ames/Warnock house.

Silverton Memories

By Fred Parkinson

Having recently become more active in the Historical Society, I have often related my personal history with the museum building itself, both at its former location on East Main Street and at its current location on South Water Street. This brings back fond memories almost every time I enter the museum.

For much of my life I have been involved in various musical groups. At Mark Twain I sang in the choir and played percussion and drums in the school band. In high school, due to a scheduling conflict, I wasn't able to continue playing the band, but I did sing in both the a cappella Choir and the Choralaires.

Being a typical teenager, I was also very interested in rock music and held the dream that many teenagers did, namely, of playing in a rock band. As a result, I had the opportunity to spend countless hours in what I knew as the Burch house, but what is currently known as the Ames, Warnock, and Burch house, home of our wonderful museum.

The house was built in 1908 on the South side of East Main Street, between First and Second streets by Louis Ames. He, along with his brother Sam, was a prominent businessman in town. He built the house as a wedding gift for his son Elvin and his new wife. According to their obituaries, the brothers came to Oregon in the 1870's. They were initially involved with a sawmill on the Pudding River and in later times owned the Silverton Sash and Door Company, as well as the well-known Ames Hardware store that for years occupied the Wolf building on the corner of Main and Water Streets. Louis apparently moved to Southern California, where he lived until his death in 1938. The home was sold around 1916 to the John P Warnock family. They had several children, at least one of which was born in what is now the upstairs toy room of the museum.



In 1947 the home was initially rented, then sold, to Don and Frances (Nelson) Burch, who lived in the house until the early 1970's. The Burches operated the Homeseekers Agency in Silverton for years. In 1975 the house was moved, with great fanfare, to its present location to become the home of the new museum.

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The house was originally built on an elevation a few feet higher than street level. According to Jack Hande, much of the property in that area was at a somewhat higher elevation, with the streets being cut through to maintain a consistent grade coming up from the creek. As a result, many homes typically had a retaining wall at street level with a few steps up from the sidewalk to get to a walkway leading up to the front porch. Old photographs of the house, as well as those of the old Anderson Hotel across the street, show just such retaining walls and stairs.

My connection with the house comes primarily during high school. Don and Frances's son, Rick, and I were in various music groups together, including the Choralaires. In addition to singing, Rick was in the four piece rock band (it was called a combo thensuch an archaic word!) that accompanied the Choralaires. This "combo" was made up of Rick Burch on bass, Doug Norman on drums, Rod Almquist on guitar, and Gordie Goschie on keyboards. Although these kids had been playing music with each other for a few years, a natural progression of these talented musicians was the formation of a rock band to play high school dances and other events.

In those days, as it is today, it was very cool to be in a rock band.

Around the time Rick and the boys were playing together, I became involved in a three piece band. Rick Ernst played his Hagstom guitar, Darrell Carter played his Hagstrom bass, and I played my pearl blue Slingerland drums. Sunn amplifiers were all around. One of my most prized possessions was my Shure Unidyne III microphone, mounted on a "baby boom" mic stand that allowed me to sing harmony while playing the drums.

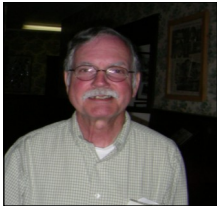
All bands need a place to rehearse and being in the "music community" it became generally known that the Burch house was *the* place to go to rehearse or just to jam with other musicians. Even though our band had a place to rehearse, it was also great fun to go to the Burch house to either watch the band rehearse or to just jam with anyone who happened to be around. Since the house was set at the higher elevation noted previously, you entered the basement through a side door that opened directly from the driveway, which was at the same grade as the street. This made it very easy for anyone to wander in and out. Since one could hear the music from a block away, there was a steady stream of people, both boys and girls, coming in and out of the basement.

As my rock drummer career waned (surprisingly so!) I boogied (a little pre-disco lingo....) off to Oregon State for four years. Little did I know that after I got back into town I would have another adventure in the basement, although not technically in the same basement in which we played our music.

In 1975 I was part of a clandestine operation (code name: Red Kitty), up until recently known only to a select few hundred people. The purpose of the mission was to bury a time capsule in the recently dug basement underneath the newly situated museum. The capsule was an old stainless steel soft drink container, filled with artifacts of the period. I was brought along as official event photographer. The photos taken of this operation had remained buried in the archives for many years until they were recently unearthed. The entire adventure was recently chronicled in this newsletter by Gus Frederick, another participant in the Red Kitty Affair.

What stands out for me in this entire tale is that two people were involved with me in both stories, namely Gordie Goschie and Rick Ernst. They both played music in the basement and were instrumental in burying the time capsule. Perhaps more telling is that to this day I am still friends with Gordie as well as with Rick, before his untimely passing last year.

It truly says something remarkable about the nature of a wonderful little town like Silverton, when we can relate two dissimilar events, occurring thirty-five to forty years ago, with such fond memories.

From the President.....

How does a museum become a museum? This is not a trick question. It would be easy to answer it by stating that a museum just is.....But that is not the case. Is it just a building? Absolutely not, though many times it seems to start out that way. But not always.

No, a museum almost always start with an idea in someone's head, even perhaps a collective idea from like-minded folks who have an interest in preserving a piece of their own heritage, or a part of their community's history. Much like the folks who gathered together here in Silverton in 1974 with the idea of saving what portions of the past that were still able to be saved. And those folds did well. Their faith in an idea of preserving a piece of Silverton was even able to move buildings—the historic Ames-Warnock House and the Silverton Train Depot to the location where they now sit. And here we are some 38 years later, continuing the vision and involved in preserving what's important to save from an earlier Silverton.

But obviously, it all doesn't just happen. Lots of folks over the years have had a hand in that hard work. Since I don't want to run the risk of leaving someone's name out, let me simply say that the Silverton Country Historical Society has gone through many presidents and officers, curators, self-described historians, and many, many volunteers who have added their own special touch to the development of the museum, so that the community can continue to enjoy it.

And the work continues. Nearly every time I stop by, there is someone working at the ongoing tasks that need doing. These people just continue doing their thing because of their commitment to SCHS, and where would we be without them. There is cataloging of accessions, and organizing the collection, and revamping the displays, and working on the yard around the building, and writing the newsletter and then putting it together for mailing and getting it mailed. And in between there are meetings, and telephone calls to organize, and just plain hard work.

In the midst of it all, all of those who volunteer their time and energy receive the same pay, absolutely nothing. Except for the satisfaction of knowing they are contributing to a group effort to maintain a wonderful display of Silverton's heritage for others to see and enjoy.

I recently began my quest to cover as many of the mid-valley museums that I can during the balance of this year. If I don't get to all of them, I'll get to as many as I can. Historical preservation and maintaining the heritage of their little portion of the state is important to folks in lots of communities. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Linn County Museum in Brownsville, which has a very impressive display of items from that area, including lots of dedicated sections showcasing various industries, businesses, and historical artifacts from virtually all over Linn County. Visiting other museums gives me the chance to visit with folks in other communities and to tell them about our museum as well. I plan to take a few of our brochures with me wherever I go visiting. I want others to know what good things the Silverton Country Museum has to offer.

Norm

Silverton Country Museum - History in the Making

You can play a part in keeping our museum a strong presence in the community. Volunteers are needed to help with hosting at the Museum. If you can share **just 3 hours** a month – please call Jan Long, 503-873-7070. No experience required—just a desire to share the story of Silverton with anyone who cares.

SCHS Dime Toss at Homer Davenport Community Festival! Glassware and Volunteers Needed!!



Once again we will be hosting the old fashioned Coin Toss at the Homer Davenport Community Festival, August 3,4,5, and once again, we still need your donations of un-needed glassware, cups, vases, flower pots—whatever will stand up to being pelted by dimes. You can leave your donations at the museum on Tuesdays, between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. or on weekends when we're open from 1-4 p.m., or put them on Kathy Hunter's porch at 211 Welch Street in Silverton. Your help is greatly appreciated! And please let us know if you would be willing to share the fun by helping at the booth during

the festival. Great way to fit in a little community service while schmoozing with friends and visitors. Leave a message at 503-873-7070. Thank you!

Other Museum Happenings...



The sign on the depot that identifies this stop as Silverton has been repainted, thanks to Kay LaLone, and repositioned, thanks to Gary Ohren and Robin Anderson. Just in time for summer and the rush of tourists!



A brand new flag proudly waves over the Veterans Memorial on the Museum grounds. Thank you to the American Legion Post 7 for this generous donation!

New Dog in Town?????



Look out Bobbie the Wonder Dog.....Silverton has another canine hero who received some recognition at the recent Pet Parade. Leading the assemblage of bikes, dogs, cats, goats and what have you, was Grand Marshal Boomba, an 8-year-old hairless Chinese crested dog who played a part in the reporting of the fire at the Palace Theater on April 11. That morning he fussed earlier than usual until his owner Carla Mahler took him outdoors and that is when she discovered the fire in the theater lobby and called 911. Boomba was dressed in his own firefighting costume as he led the historic parade. He's very cute, but Bobbie, I think your place in history is intact!



Palace Theater History

Earlier this year several of you were able to view the very special documentary of Vesper Geer produced by Michael Turner. Well, we've got him hooked on our little town. An upcoming project will be a short film on the history of the Palace Theater and Mike will be looking for stories and photographs from long-time residents of the community. If you have anything you'd like to contribute, give us a call at 503-873-7070 and we will get Mike in touch with you...

Historic Silver Falls Days Saturday and Sunday, July 14 & 15, 2012 10:00 am - 4:00 pm



LOCATION: South Falls Lodge and surrounding day use area

WHAT: The land we know today as Silver Falls State Park has a colorful and interesting history. There will be demonstrations, displays and activities to help bring this history to life.

SPONSORED BY: Co-sponsored by Friends of Silver Falls and Silver Falls State Park

COST: \$5.00 per vehicle day use fee, otherwise there is no charge.

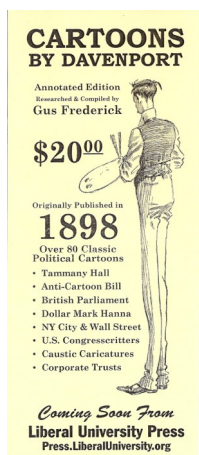
For more information, call 503-873-8681 ext. 21 or 503-874-0201

Look for a display from the Silverton Country Historical Society

Oral History Project

The Historical Society is hoping to continue with the collection of oral histories—if you are interested in sharing your story or if you would like to learn the nuts and bolts of interviewing and recording these wonderful stories from the past, contact us at 503-873-7070. You can make it happen!

Coming Soon!



The new
2nd edition of
*Cartoons by
Davenport*,
Compiled by
Gus Frederick

Events at the Gordon House

Saturday, June 23—a special celebration to commemorate what would have been the month of Wright's 145th birthday. Self-guided tours of the house are available from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for the special birthday celebration price of \$2 per person, and members are free.

Sunday, August 12, 3 to 6 pm—*A Taste of Frank Lloyd Wright*—Oregon chefs team up with Willamette Valley farmers, wineries, and brewers to provide food, drink, and family fun with friends. Silent and live auctions, drawings, and bluegrass troubadours will add to the festival.

Call 503-874-6006 for more information.



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Have a Safe and Happy 4th of July!

Thank you to our new and
renewing members—

Duane and Paulette Olson
Amy McKinley
Margo Drake Walker
Pat Gamaehlich
Nancy Korda (Edward Adams House B&B)
Bill Predeck
Edward “Jack” Geer
Jan Foraker
Craig and Joan Clark
Mel Dean
Michael Maze
Barbara Bassett and Roger Roper
Tracy Duerst
Carolyn Simmons

**And Thank You for a generous donation
from Margo Drake Walker**

The value of the support of our members
cannot be adequately measured.

Your S.C.H.S. Board

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

Thank you!