

Silverton Country Historical Society

Museum and Office 428 South Water Street



Charles F. DeGuire: Civil War Veteran

By Fred A. Parkinson

Imagine a friend coming up to you and saying proudly, “My father was a Civil War veteran!” This would have been a relatively common occurrence in the late nineteenth century and then increasingly less so as the years rolled on. Imagine, however, hearing this in the last decades of the *twentieth* century. *That* would definitely peak some interest. And, depending on how one defines the turn of the century, one might have the remarkable circumstance to know someone alive in the first year of the *twenty-first century* whose father had been a Civil War veteran, a truly extraordinary circumstance. In order for this unusual situation to occur, a few things would have had to fall into place. First, the veteran would have had to be a very young soldier during the Civil War. Next, he would have had to father a child late in life. Finally, the child would have had to live a long life that extended into the twenty-first century. This circumstance has actually occurred in Silverton.

Longtime Silverton resident Charles F. DeGuire (1909-2000), known as “Chuck” to family and friends, was often known to comment that his father, also Charles, was a Civil War veteran, serving during the last months of the war.

Charles Francis DeGuire (1846-1928) was born on September 12, 1846, the second child of Francis B. (1818-1909) and Eleanor St. Gemme (1825-1862) DeGuire in Fredericktown, Missouri. He arrived in Silverton with his parents at about age twelve. When he was either fourteen or seventeen (accounts vary), Charles and his older brother, John, started work at the woolen mill in Salem, learning weaving in the process. He worked at this for about a year. During this time his career was apparently interrupted by the Civil War.

After the war broke out in 1861, regular US Army troops went east to fight. To provide additional security in the west, one volunteer cavalry regiment and two volunteer infantry regiments were ultimately raised in Oregon.

Young Charles heeded the call for volunteers, enlisting in the army on December 9, 1864. He mustered in at Camp Russell, located in Salem at the State Fairgrounds, and was assigned to Company C, First Oregon Volunteer Infantry (1st OVI). As an incentive to join, he undoubtedly received the \$150 enlistment bounty recently authorized by the state legislature.

According to the “Form For Examining a Recruit,” completed by an “Inspecting Surgeon” on December 15, 1864, Charles was eighteen years old and was five feet, five inches tall at the time of his enlistment. He had brown hair and black eyes, with a dark complexion. Blank lines were provided on the form to indicate the status of various

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From the President...

I am constantly amazed at the activity level of our small group of volunteers at the museum. I stop in frequently to see what is going on there and if there is something that needs my attention. Most of the time, there is someone there taking care of a myriad of items that a small museum needs doing, whether it's a maintenance or repair issue, assembling the newsletter, researching for an article, planning for a membership meeting program, revamping the display, entering the detailed information that goes into our PastPerfect program that helps us organize our historical collection, giving someone a tour of our displays, the list just goes on and on. That small group of volunteers, you know who you are, Fred, Carolyn, Chris, Robin, Gary, Jan, and that's the problem with listing names, it's easy to forget someone, but this is about the hardest working bunch of volunteers that I have ever seen. These folks care about Silverton history and it definitely shows.



I've said it before and I hope I'll say it over and over again because it's worthy of that effort, thank you volunteers for all you do on behalf of the Silverton Country Historical Society. And if others of you would like to give some of your time to the task of keeping things going in a small town museum, we'd be happy to have you join that effort too.

Update: Contributions keep coming in for the Silverton Fallen Heroes War Memorial, now totaling more than \$7,800. And, over the past 3-4 weeks, we have been revising slightly some of the cosmetic features of the memorial and the surrounding area where it will be located in Town Square Park. The total names currently stand at 58, with possibly a couple more to be added. The additional names meant that we needed a slightly larger version of the memorial, and that added about \$2,000 alone to the price tag. The cost keeps changing too. The other added features have now increased the project cost to almost \$23,000, although we are hopeful that in-kind donations for some of the bricks and paver stones will drop this figure. At any rate, it appears that we will be needing an additional \$7,600. We'd like to break ground sometime within the next couple of months, but really need to have the additional funds in the bank before that happens. The plan is to ask for a larger grant, on top of the grant we



received from Oregon Parks & Recreation, so we would only need to raise about \$3,800. But we don't know if that is possible or not. We still have one more presentation to make before the city council to get their final go ahead on the design and features. So, if you can help with a contribution, let's put this thing 'over the top'. Our memorial committee of Jack Hande, Ray Hunter, Gregg Sheesley, new member Steve Wiley, and I have met three times and pretty much finalized the names and most of the design features. There also was a recent follow-up article in the Silverton Appeal Tribune to get further word out on the project. This has been a challenge to raise the necessary funds, but I believe that we are up to the challenge. Thank you to all who have helped with donations.



Committee hard at work.

Norm

Silverton Country Museum - History in the Making

Charles DeGuire (cont. from Page 1)

parts of the body. In addition to the typical “eyes”, “ears”, and “nose,” etc., a line on the form was curiously (at least by today’s standards) labeled: “Organs of Mastication and Voice.” Today, this line would be labeled either “mouth” or “throat.” Charles was in good health and had been vaccinated for smallpox. Incredibly, the form indicates that he had never been sick and had never suffered any fractures or sprains.

Company C was initially sent to Fort Vancouver, but was soon transferred to Fort Steilacoom, located at the southern end of Puget Sound in the Washington Territory. Charles probably served mostly garrison duty, as was common for most soldiers stationed west of the Cascades during the war. He went into the army as a private, as did most new recruits, and emerged with the rank of musician, a rank that typically fell between private and corporal. It’s not known what instrument he played, but one of his descendants recently mentioned that he probably played the trumpet.

Musicians in the Civil War were generally divided into two types: field musicians and band musicians. Field musicians were used to initiate various camp functions including reveille, call to meals, and other activities that occurred at camp. These musicians included buglers and drummers and occasionally fifers. During combat operations it was often impossible to hear shouted commands over the din of battle. In order for these battlefield commands to be heard, buglers would play different calls to advise the soldiers as to what was required of them. The other type of musician was the band musician, performing in concert ensembles that included full scale brass and percussion sections. These bands were primarily used for entertainment, but they also could set the cadence during long marches. It’s not known which type of musician Charles DeGuire was involved with.

Charles served in the army for close to eleven months. He was mustered out at Salem on October 31, 1865. During his early life after the war he worked a series of jobs. In later years he operated a jewelry store and was one of the founders of the Peoples Bank. He spent his long career in Silverton, becoming engaged in many business ventures including farming and real estate.

Charles married Arlena Brown in 1873. She was the daughter of James Brown, an early Silverton Pioneer. They began working land that Arlena inherited from her father. They had one son, Murton, born in 1875. Arlena Brown DeGuire died in 1885. In 1893 Charles married again, this time to Julia Brydger, a native of England, who was about sixteen years his junior. They had four children; Olfan, Alvis, Vada, and Charles, who was born in 1909, when his father was sixty-two years old. DeGuire began construction of a large home for his growing family that still stands on Hill Street. The May 28, 1909 *Silvertonian Appeal* ran a short piece stating “On account of building and the ill health of his father who is past 91 years of age, Mr. DeGuire has decided to vacate his position in the Peoples Bank.”



DeGuire Family c. 1912

The DeGuire family was musically talented. Charles formed the first brass band in Silverton in either 1877 or 1879 (accounts vary), serving as the director until 1885. His son, Murton, played the trombone. DeGuire’s father, Francis, had once played the fiddle. And another DeGuire son, Charles, played the bugle in the National Guard.

Charles F. DeGuire, Civil War veteran, passed away in Silverton on June 4, 1928 at age eighty-one. At the time of his death all of his family lived in the Silverton/Salem area. His fourth son, Charles (Chuck), lived in Silverton for many years. He built a house in the early 1960s on Hill Street on property adjacent to land on which his father had built a house in 1909.

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Charles De Guire (Continued from Page 3)

Chuck passed away on November 7, 2000 at age ninety-one. He lived for nine months into the twenty-first century, becoming one of those rare people still alive at that time who could say their dad was a Civil War veteran.

Civil War widows were eligible to receive their husband's federal pension upon his death. Charles DeGuire's second wife, Julia, who was sixteen years younger than him, outlived Charles by thirty-five years and lived to one-hundred-one years of age. This meant that there was a woman, born in 1862 and the widow of a Civil War veteran, living in Silverton, who collected her husband's Civil War pension until she passed away..... in 1963!

ROSES OF OLD OREGON

Telling History Through the Stories of Roses



Learn about roses with roots deeply entwined with Oregon's past, yet thriving and blooming in the present

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Celebrate the 150th birthday of Fr. George Schoener, "Padre of the Roses"

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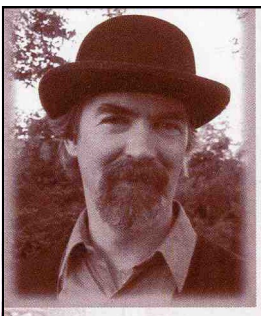
Enthralling stories from the
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 Funding from The Fred W. Fields Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation
 ♦ Special Northwest Rose Historians Event Celebrates Fr. Schoener's 150th Birthday ♦
 Join us Saturday March 22nd, 1:00 pm in the Willamette Heritage Center's Dye House

Northwest Rose Historians

Stories of days gone by and family ties help define a heritage rose. Historians refer to these roses by their connections to place, person or historical event. SCHS members, Ruth and Fred Kaser, who live in the Marquam area, are caretakers of the Clark-Whitlock Rose which is mentioned in the current display at the Willamette Heritage Center.

A cutting is also growing at the Scotts Mills Area Historical Society.

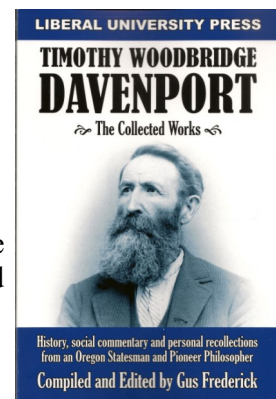


Gordon Munro on the Radio!

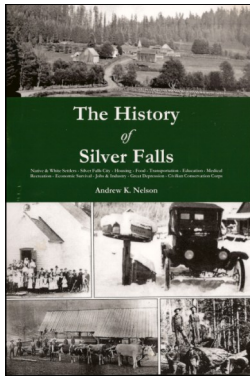
Silverton's own Storyteller now has a half hour radio show where he will relate tales of early local and Oregon history as well as folk tales from around the world. Gordon's Fire Light Stories will be on the community radio station in Salem—KMUZ, 88.5 on the FM dial. If the signal is too weak for your radio, it also streams on-line at KMUZ.org. (LIVE STREAM: http://streema.com/radios/KMUZ_88.5_FM) The show is the second Sunday of each month from 9:30 to 10:00 am., beginning April 13th.

The Collected Works of Timothy W. Davenport Compiled and Edited by Gus Frederick

Gus Frederick's most recent publication is now available for purchase at the Silverton Country Historical Society Museum. In this work, Gus has included history and social commentaries and personal recollections of this man who was notable on his own, not solely as the father of Homer Davenport. For the first time TW's works are presented in one volume, "allowing researchers, history buffs and others a unique view of late 19th century Oregon, through the progressive pen of one of this State's leading pioneer intellectuals." Gus will be hosting a program at the Museum later this year on Timothy Davenport.



SCHS Member Program for May Tuesday, May 6 – at 7 pm at the Museum

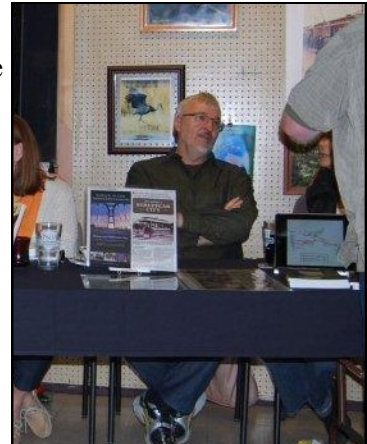


SCHS is pleased to welcome Andrew K. Nelson, a volunteer with the Friends of Silver Falls State Park, on Tuesday, May 6 at 7 pm, who will be discussing his recent book, *The History of Silver Falls*. Mr. Nelson traces the development of the Silver Falls area from the early settlers, the Kalapuya and the Molalla, and continues on to the establishment of the community of Silver Falls City. Included are stories about the people who helped form Silver Falls State Park into what we cherish today. Copies will be available for purchase

Mr. Nelson is also the editor of “We Were There,” a compilation of recollections from people who lived in the Silver Falls area or knew about life there from the late 1880’s through the early 1900’s. Blanche Sweger, the founder of Friends of Silver Falls State Park, compiled the original 60 interviews into a loose-leaf collection called “We Were There.” In June of 2012, Mr. Nelson added 12 additional interviews and worked with the Friends of Silver Falls State Park to have the work bound and printed.

As Mothers’ Day is fast approaching, Andy will fill us in on the upcoming Mother’s Day Birding and Wildflower Festival to be held Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11, 2014 from 10 am to 4 pm at Silver Falls Lodge. Free, except for the \$5 per vehicle day use fee.

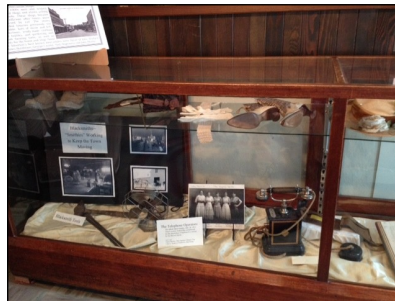
For more information on any of these items, call 503-874-0201.



Andy Nelson at the SCHS History Book Fair, held in October 2013

New Display at the Museum.

We have moved our display from the Willamette Heritage Center to our main display case here at the museum. The photos and artifacts reflect some ways the people of early Silverton made a living. Stop in and visit!



Eldon Johnson –2/27/1925—3/10/2014

We are sorry to have to share with you the passing of longtime SCHS volunteer and Board member Eldon Johnson on the 10 of March 2014. For many years Eldon was the treasure for the Society and was always ready to help with projects. He will be missed.



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Thank you to our new and renewing members—
Your support is what keeps us going!

Chris Schwab	Marlene Hanson	Larry Thomas
Carolyn Hutton	Andy and Lou Nelson	Susan Beale
Jim and Tanya Little	Luanne Crail	John Dahl
Mark English	Steve Wiley	Ernie Hento
Bob and Donna Eberle	Craig Weber (donor)	

Fallen Heroes Memorial Donors—

Jeff and Cindy Lampa	Doris Hartley	Phyllis Haberly Burson
Paul and Mary Lou Bucheit	Luanne Crail	Andy and Lou Nelson

In Memory of Jon Digerness—
Silverton High School Class of 1962

**And a most sincere thank you to
the Homer Davenport Community Festival Board!**

Thank you to all of our loyal supporters!

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overdue notice with your
newsletter, we appreciate
your prompt response.
Thank you!**