

# Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Over Forty Years of History in the Making



Museum and Office  
428 South Water Street

## Burton's Pharmacy: What Came Next?

### Part 1

By Fred A. Parkinson

*--Editor's note: Historical research rarely occurs in chronological order, especially if there is no specific date from which to start. In the case of Burton's Pharmacy, we were initially able to find relevant information by first encountering a newspaper article published after the store was sold for the second time. This feature story will present some newspaper articles out of chronological order, just as they were discovered by the author.*

It all started with a ninety-two-year-old artifact. The 12 inch wooden ruler promoted a local business with the slogan "For Reliability." Also printed on the face of the ruler were clues to the business's location. . . . . "Inman Building . . . . Opposite Post Office . . . . Silverton, Oregon." One could assume, in the small town of Silverton, that most residents knew where the Inman Building was located, and if they didn't, they would certainly know the location of the local Post Office. "Main 36" was printed on the left end of the ruler, showing the modern business had a telephone. In what might be considered a brilliant play on words, the reverse side of the ruler was labeled "Rulers of U.S.A.---Dates of---Birth, Presidency and Death," listing each U.S. president and ending with the current president . . . . . Calvin Coolidge.

Many Silverton residents today might not know where the business was located, based on information printed on the ruler. The Inman Building exists today, although there is no indication on its exterior labeling it as such. And forget using the Post Office to get your bearings, as the local Post Office has changed its location several times since 1925.

The location alluded to on the ruler was 116 First Street, in the two (now three) story yellow building on the corner of First and Oak streets. The business name on the ruler was Burton's Pharmacy, established in 1925 during the presidency of Calvin Coolidge.



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*Burton's Pharmacy, Continued from Page 1*

In December 1924 local plumber Leo E. Inman announced his plans to erect a two story brick and tile building at the corner of First and Oak streets. The property was purchased from A. L. Robenolt on the site of the old, soon to be torn down, A. C. Steelhammer blacksmith shop. Inman's plumbing business would utilize a portion of the first floor while providing for one other business in the adjacent room. Burton's Pharmacy, a new drug store, soon occupied that space, if only for a relatively short time. A similar business used that same location by 1930. The question then becomes: "Was there a connection between Burton's Pharmacy and the store that showed up five years later? Was there a similar business in that same place between the time Burton's Pharmacy occupied it and when the other business entered the community in 1930? Another historical mystery was at hand!



Burton's Pharmacy circa 1925

Vintage telephone books were consulted at the museum to begin the search for answers. A listing for Burton's Pharmacy first appeared in the October 1925 and again in the July 1926 Interurban phone directories, complete with full page ads on page one. The listing for Burton's Pharmacy was gone by the time the October 1927 directory was published. Continuing to peruse subsequent phone directories shows the first listing for the new business in the December 1930 edition, showing the location as "Inman Building."

The investigation continued at the library, utilizing old Silverton newspapers, to find evidence of another business at the corner of Oak and First streets between 1927 and 1930. Finally, after two hours of mind-numbing microfilm scrutiny, a headline jumped out: "**Drug Store Sold to Salem People.**" The August 15, 1930 edition of the newly merged *Silverton Appeal-Tribune* reported: "The N. J. Thomsen drug store at the corner of First and Oak streets has been sold to W. H. High of Salem, Oregon." This was the first indication that another drug store had existed at that corner after Burton's Pharmacy and before the new 1930 store, but it was not clear whether or not the Thomsen Drug Company came immediately after Burton's.

An old wooden ruler and a couple of listings in the local phone book were all that was known of Burton's Pharmacy before the pivotal August 15 newspaper article was discovered. However, the article noted that Thomsen's Drug Company had been in operation for 3 1/2 years, compelling further study by going back in time.

Searching the microfilm back 3 1/2 years found the February 25, 1927 *Silverton Appeal* reporting: "**Burton Sells Drug business.**" That store had been sold to a person from Nevada. Again working backward through the microfilm, the July 17, 1925 *Silver-*

*ton Appeal* published a display ad that read: "We invite the General Public to inspect our new Drug Store which is opening Saturday, July 18, in the new Inman building, corner of Oak and First Streets. Come in and get acquainted. We will appreciate a call. A.W. Burton Druggist."

*Continued on Page 3*

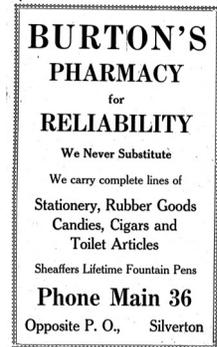
*Burton's Pharmacy, Continued from Page 2*

Remarkably, in that same edition, under the headline: “**New Drug Store Opening July 18,**” -- the *Silverton Appeal* erroneously printed the location of the new store as the corner of Oak and Second streets rather than Oak and First. The article also said that Mr. Burton had been a pharmacist for twelve years, most recently operating a similar store in Powers, Oregon in Coos County. The *Silverton Appeal* published a special edition containing profiles of most of the businesses in town on October 2, 1925. In describing Burton's Pharmacy the paper stated: “Mr. Burton is not only a live, progressive pharmacist but is one of those men who would be a citizen asset to any community.”

Burton's Pharmacy was a regular advertiser in both the local paper and the telephone directory; always with the slogan: “For Reliability.” But then, on February 25, 1927, after only one year and seven months in business, the *Appeal* ran a story revealing the sale of the store to N. J. Thomsen of McGill, Nevada.

That was it! For the first time there was conclusive evidence that there *was* a direct connection between Burton's Pharmacy and the 1930 business and yes, there *had been another similar business* in the same location between the time Burton's Pharmacy left and when the 1930 business entered the scene. The missing link turned out to be the Thomsen Drug Company.

But the story is not yet finished. After the store was sold for the second time, 1930 would see a new owner and a final name change for the business that would then endure for another sixty-four years. The business that began as Burton's Pharmacy would ultimately operate for sixty-nine years in two different locations, under three different business names, and with five different owners, the last owning the business for more than half of its existence. How the business further evolved will be the subject of **part 2**.



## SCHS Dime Toss—Homer Davenport Community Festival!!



The response to our request for donations of glassware has been really amazing and gratifying. Thank you to all our members and friends! We are slowly stockpiling glassware for our dime toss booth at the Homer Davenport Community Festival in August. **But we still need more.** So, please keep cleaning out cupboards, basements and garages and combing garage sales looking for items you can donate.



Any sort of containers that a dime will land in will be appreciated.

We love this stuff!! Next step—Cleaning and sorting! Keep it coming folks!

## Welcome Russ Gould to SCHS!

At last! A brief bio on one of our newest board members, Russ Gould. He was born in Silverton and graduated from SUHS in 1995. Russ has loved Silverton and its history since childhood, with the historic buildings particularly catching his eyes. He is a collector of real photo post cards of Silverton as well as other miscellaneous Silverton-related items. He enjoys the small-town feel of Silverton—working for Silverton Area Community Aid (SACA) gives him the opportunity to meet and make friends with so many great people in the community.

We welcome Russ to our SCHS family!



## Curator's Corner

The museum has just finished up a month filled with the sounds of students. Ashley Crisell's second/third grade class from Central Howell visited on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May and then just this week, we had five third grade classes from Robert Frost. Many thanks to our volunteers: Norm English, Carolyn Hutton, Ruth Kaser and Chris Schwab (who I do not know how we would ever get along without her). Each tour brought a wealth of questions and thoughtful answers. One thoughtful answer to my question of 'Who knows why people moved to Silverton?' the answer was, 'Because they liked the park.' The answer I was looking for was more because of fertile farm land and the timber industry. We did finally get to that point, but it has gotten me thinking about why people would like to move here and why it was a good place to settle so many years ago. Silverton is unique in so many ways. Much of our surrounding area is still farmland and yes, there is still some logging being done even though the mills have shut down. With that being said it still has a small town flavor that invites people to stay awhile and enjoy 'the park'.



What I am increasingly satisfied by is the old town feeling that many of our buildings are keeping as they remodel. As we look at old photos taken during the early 1900's the same buildings have much the same look as they did so many years ago. The wonderful plaques that are being installed show the old as it was with a view of the current. Not only will our visitors be able to see the 'old' town but all of us who live here will be constantly reminded of our past. I find that to be a wonderful gift to our town and am so grateful to those who have given to the plaque campaign and to Victor Madge and his team who have worked to make this happen.



One change that I am personally aware of is that of my grandfather's house, which has now become the home of a children's dentist. The house I remember did not have an addition or a parking lot in the backyard, but the house next did have a dentist office, so even though times have changed I guess you can say that dentists always find their way back home? What is heartwarming to me is that with my grandfather's house and so many other buildings in Silverton, people have kept these wonderful buildings alive instead of as in many places just tearing them down and building something new. Keeping history alive!

*Judy Lowery*

Remember — The Museum is open Saturday and Sunday afternoons  
from 1 to 4 pm

## Museum House Story

We were visited recently by Rick and Janette Burch. Rick grew up in the 1950's in the house that SCHS now calls home. It was great to visit with him and learn more about the way things were before it was moved here and became our museum. He vividly remembered the wall paper in the living room and noted that at one time the home was a boarding house with numbers over the upstairs bedrooms. The alcove that now houses our Red Sox display, was a breakfast room for the tenants and the very small room that is now a closet for our collection of clothing and shoes, etc. was a bathroom, complete with claw-foot tub! Thanks for visiting, Rick and Janette!





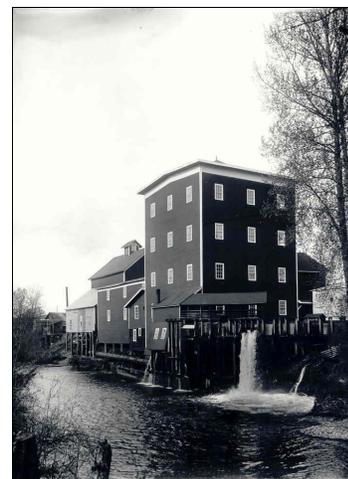
## SOUNDSTREAM MUSIC PRESENTS— FISCHER'S MILL MUSIC FEST 2017

A FREE community celebration for the new  
Silverton Creekside Amphitheater in Silverton  
Saturday, June 10th, 2017 — From 2 pm to 9 pm

Old Mill Park Amphitheater - Silverton, Oregon  
( On the creek behind the Library and the Museum)

Seven Regional and Local Bands - Local musicians and  
bands from Silverton, Eugene, Portland and beyond

Craft beer from Seven Brides Brewery of Silverton  
Local food vendor booths, including Creekside Grill & The  
Grotto Martini Bar and others



Museum sponsored booth featuring Fischer's Mill history along  
with other surprises

Come visit with us all day for good music and good times.

For more information go to <http://www.fischersmillmusicfest.com/> or visit us on Facebook at  
Fischer's Mill Music Fest 2017



### Also on Saturday, June 10—

**Frank Lloyd Wright 150th Birthday Party** at the Gordon House at the Oregon Garden. 10 Am to 12 pm, \$5 entry fee. Plus  
Music event—Portland-based band, Kendalin, \$25, 7:30 to 9 pm

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual tour of "Oregon's Garden City"**— 10 am to 4 pm. Explore 8 home gardens. Tickets are \$15 in advance,  
\$20 the day of, children 10 and under are free. Tickets may be purchased online, at the Silverton together office and at the  
Silverton Farmers Market. The event is a fundraiser for Silverton Together and the Silverton Garden Club.

### And later in June—

**Silverton Hills Strawberry Festival**, Sunday, June 18, 11 am to 5 pm. Coolidge –McClaine Park covered area

**And Coming soon! Six more historic pedestal plaques.  
First one—Fischer's Mill. Keep an eye open around town for the rest!**



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*Celebrating Over 40 Years in the Community*

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**Thank you to our new and renewing members and generous donors and to anyone who has given anonymously to the Museum or any of its projects—**

**Bob and Marilyn Dedrick  
Trish and Craig Jensen**

**Kim and Candace Haakenson  
Gordon Munro and Melanie Rae**

**The Hento Family in Memory of Eleanor Hento**

**We truly appreciate your support!!**

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*Always Remember.....*



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