

Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Over Forty Years of History in the Making



Museum and Office
428 South Water Street

The Silverton Recreation Center

Part 3

By Fred A. Parkinson

Romance was often in the air at the Rec. Several people have said they met their future spouses there.

And then there's the story of the young lady who attended her girlfriend's wedding at the Methodist church. After the wedding, she decided to go downtown across the Main Street Bridge to the Rec. Along the way she encountered a couple of guys, whom she vaguely knew.

She asked, "Where are you guys headed?"

"The Rec Hall" they replied.

"Me too." The young lady said.

And so they went down to the Rec Hall together to hang out. The woman in question reported recently that "something must have cliqued that day" because, as things turned out, she and one of the guys she met downtown that were married two and a half months later. They have been married for close to sixty years, as of this writing.



Only known photo of the Rec

Paul Cooper owned the Rec Center for the second shortest duration of the seven owners at eleven months. Ownership of the Rec then passed to the Richard Hoefs, (pronounced Hāfes) Sr. and Richard Hoefs, Jr. families during the last week of November 1957. They were the seventh and last family to operate the Silverton Recreation Center. An open house was planned after a repainting and remodeling job was done at the Center.

The Rec Center might have been considered a refuge for young people for more than one reason. Around 1959 a young man collided with a local doctor's car, causing a minor traffic accident. He immediately got out of his car and ran into the Rec to hide. A few minutes later someone came in, asking if anyone had seen the youth who had run from the accident scene. When asked, the manager said that he hadn't seen the person. What the manager may or may not have known at the time was that kid was actually hiding under a pool table at the rear of the hall!

Since it concerned their kids, Silverton's citizens were always paying attention to goings-on at the Rec. One such person, a local high school teacher, lived in an upstairs apartment directly across the street from the Rec Center. He had a front row seat to view activities out his front window. Perhaps it was he who had observed the young lady hanging around outside the Rec and then told her parents.

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Curator's Corner

I thought I would take some time to thank everyone for a wonderful year. With the help of our faithful volunteers and our amazing donors, we have been able to accomplish quite a lot. The observation post has been rejuvenated and the display cabinet for the Homer Davenport cartoons has been completed. Both of these huge undertakings were made possible through a large donation from Walt Pelett along with several other donors. Larry Thomas has done a beautiful job making the cabinet and David Laycock of Renaissance Carpentry has worked to preserve our post for many years to come.

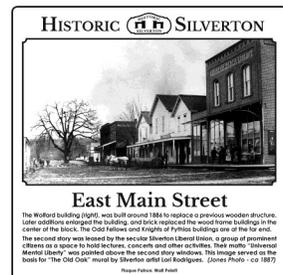


The museum has been asked to participate in Willamette Heritage's **2018 Heritage Invitational Exhibit**. This year we are partnering with Geer Crest Farm to showcase the impact that one pioneer family had on our local history. The theme is: ***ARRIVAL: Stories of Migration, Immigration and Journeys in the Mid-Willamette Valley***. The exhibit opens to the public January 27, 2018, and runs until April 21. I would encourage everyone to stop by and visit the exhibit. Being a descendant of two local pioneer families I am very interested in what this year's displays will showcase. Why people migrate from one area to another and their personal stories of that move is something I have always found fascinating.

Here is a photo of the land survey desk that belonged to the Geers and Homer Davenport's father, Timothy Davenport, who was married to Flora Geer. It will be a part of our display.

Recently I was going to the museum to work on a project and was stopped by a couple who had just moved here. They had retired and found Silverton and told me how friendly everyone had been to them and what a beautiful little town it is. After talking for a bit they continued on their walk and I realized that I hadn't asked them where they had moved from, which is something I usually ask.

Along with their praise, Silverton got another compliment from the town of Newberg. George Edmondson is a board member of the Newberg Area Historical Society and he called to ask about the historical plaques on our older buildings in town. Newberg is hoping to do the same with their historic buildings and are in the process of taking the first steps to get that designation and will be ready to begin the plaque process. I mentioned that our president had begun a very popular podium project and he was very interested in that as well. Early next year he is hoping that some of our board members will be able to attend a meeting and present the process we went through for these projects. I also knew how special the people of Silverton are and what a special place Silverton is and this past week has magnified that belief. May you each have a wonderful holiday season and thank you for all of the support you have given to the museum.



Judy Lowery

(Continued from Page 1)

The Hoefs daughter graciously shared memories of the Center recently. She both socialized and worked, when needed, at the Rec. She acknowledged that it initially had a questionable reputation but during her family's stewardship the Rec Center's reputation steadily improved. She remembers how the jukebox seemed to have selections that were a little behind the current trend. A person named Woody serviced the jukebox and helped to provide current music. She remembers in those days there was no formal dancing in the center but that kids would often dance among the pool and snooker tables in the back.

On December 29, 1960 a headline in the *Silverton Appeal-Tribune* stated: "**Rec Center to Close.**" Richard Hoefs announced that the Rec Center would close for good on Saturday, December 31, 1960 and all equipment and fixtures in the facility would be liquidated. The article quoted Hoefs as saying "And I want to take this opportunity to thank all our friends and customers for their patronage." The paper reported that Richard Hoefs and his family would soon be relocating to Seattle, where he would then join a construction company.

The Silverton Recreation Center was no more.

The pool tables and other items were sold. One resident reported that his neighbors bought two of the pool tables. When they moved away, he bought one them. The pool table ended up in a house he owned where squatters subsequently trashed it. Today, only the legs and part of the slate bed remain of the pool table, lying buried among other memories in a timeworn barn.

Soon after the Rec Center closed for good, Fred Parkinson, owner of the adjacent Silverton Drug, leased the building from Reber Allen, who also owned the drugstore building. Parkinson soon expanded into the newly acquired space, doubling the size of his store.

Very few pictures of the Rec center exist today. The pictures reproduced here are among the few old snapshots provided by a current Silverton resident that show the inside of the Rec. Examining these photos allowed for the description of the booths within the Rec Center. The only known full view photo of the exterior is contained in an aerial photo taken of Silverton's downtown core area in 1957. An extreme crop of that photo shows the somewhat blurry storefront of the Rec Center between Silverton Drug and what was known as the former Worden Building.

The Rec Center building still exists today on Oak Street. The exterior has been remodeled, but still has the familiar double front doors and flanking large windows, although they have been updated. Since the center closed, the building has been a drugstore, a furniture store, and a bank annex. Most recently, the old Silverton Drug building has been divided into suites for various businesses.



Thus ends a valiant attempt to provide a wholesome place for the youth of Silverton to meet. Started with the best intentions, it was perhaps a victim of its own initial success that allowed a more provocative element to contribute over the years to the center's deteriorating reputation. According to some, a parental low opinion of the classic "pool hall" as well as the constant change in ownership probably contributed to the center ending its run in Silverton. Needless to say, to this day there are still many local residents who have fond memories of the now long gone Silverton Recreation Center.

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New Mural!



Lori Webb Rodrigues is working on a new mural on the Main Street side of the former Larsen and Flynn Building: our own June Drake, photographer and “father” of Silver Falls State Park. It has been such a treat to watch it come to life under Lori’s magic touch. Keep hoping for rain-free days!

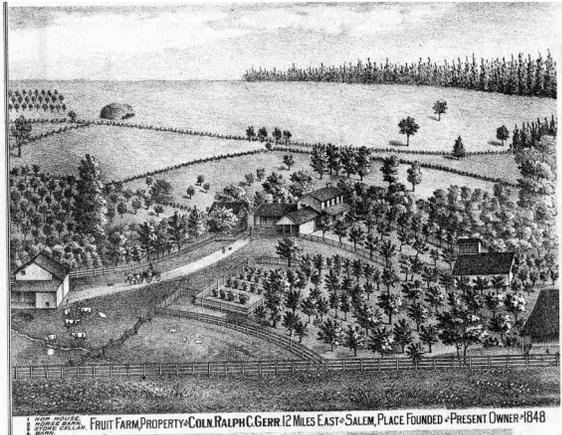


Give to the Oregon Cultural Trust

Donate to an Oregon cultural nonprofit (such as your local historical society!), then donate the same amount to the Oregon Cultural Trust by December 31 to qualify for a state tax credit. (Up to \$500 for an individuals, \$1,000 for a couple filing jointly) over 1,400 cultural nonprofits benefit from the Oregon Cultural Trust grant programs. You can donate at CulturalTrust.org or call (503)986-0086 if you have questions. A great way to double your support for Oregon’s cultural community! Thank you!

SCHS Annual Meeting, Saturday, January 20th At Geer Crest Farm

Details in the next Newsletter



“Fruit Farm, Property Coln. Ralph C. Geer. 12 Miles East of Salem, Place founded by present owner in 1848.”



GeerCrest Today

Special Offer to SCHS Members!

The Davenport Arabian Horse Conservancy has offered a 20% discount to SCHS members *ordering directly from the 1736 Farmingdale Road address*. Simply identify yourself as a **Silverton Country Historical Society** member and to pay just \$40 plus shipping (US) \$10, as a special thank you for being fine friends to the Conservancy over the years!

A New “Quest” A New Edition of the Annotated Quest of the Arabian Horse

In 1908, Silverton cartoonist, Journalist and Arabian Horse breeder, Homer Davenport, published his account of traveling to Syria in 1906 and returning with 27 pure-bred Arabian Mares and Stallions. Originally serialized in *Woman's Home Companion* magazine over the course of several months, additional material was added to the book in 1909. *My Quest of the Arab Horse* became an instant classic in Arabian Horse Breeding circles. To this day, the “Davenport Arabians” are renowned as one of the purest bloodlines in the country.

In 1992, Illinois-based Davenport Arabian breeders Jeanne and Charles Craver undertook the publishing of what they titled *The Annotated Quest*. It included Davenport's original text and illustrations, with additional details to “annotate” the story. Information regarding geographic, political, tribal, technical and other aspects of the tail-end of the Ottoman Empire filled in the back story of this acquisition expedition. At 330 pages, this publication surpassed and supplemented the original edition, and became an instant standard desk reference for Arabian horse aficionados.



Manatee stallion being shod. Paring down his hoof. Photo by Charles Arthur Moore, Jr.
(SCHS: Nancy H. Rose Collection)

Then around 2010, members of the Davenport Arabian Horse Conservatory (DAHC), embarked on a plan to re-publish and update the *Annotated Quest*. The DAHC, whom the Cravers remained deeply involved in, was dedicated to the preservation of the Davenport Arabian bloodline. The DAHC initiated a fundraising campaign while researching additional aspects of relevant side-stories. Like *The Annotated Quest*, this new edition centers Davenport's original text on the page with marginal notes elucidating 1909 references. The 480-page volume—lavishly illustrated in color and sepia—includes over 150 pages of additional material to update the story and clarify questions and mysteries surrounding this remarkable journey.

A particularly important section for scholars features new translations of the horses' Arabic documents of authentication. An annotated version of *Horses of the White City* tells of the Hamidie importation to the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, where Homer saw his first real Arabian horses. *At the Beginning* is the annotated story of early U.S. Arabian horse breeders and the founding of the Arabian Horse Club of America, now the Arabian Horse Association. These appendices add deeper context to the early days of U.S. Arabian horse breeding.

And of course Davenport's own illustrations: many additional sketches are from his notebook. A healthy selection of additional photographs from Davenport's fellow travelers Charles Arthur Moore and Jack Thompson fleshes out this amazing work. It is physically bigger than the first edition, and about twice as thick and at five pounds, twice as heavy!

Davenport's Quest of the Arabian Horse can be ordered by mail directly from Davenport Arabian Horse Conservancy at 1736 S. Farmingdale Road, New Berlin, IL 62670, for \$50 plus \$10 for shipping. Online orders may be placed through Amazon. **SCHS Members, see special offer on Page 4.**



Illustration from Davenport's field notebook, featuring “Wadduda” the first Arabian mare gifted to Davenport in Aleppo, Syria by Sheikh Ahmet Hafiz. This mare is the great-great-grandmother of equine actor Bamboo Harvester, also known as “Mr. Ed.” The note recounts how Homer rode Waduda <sic> to visit the grave of Abul Ala, the “Blind Arab Poet from the 11th Century” he quotes in the preface to his autobiography *The Country Boy*, (page 10).



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Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year
from your SCHS!

**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—**

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We truly appreciate your support!!

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

The Museum is closed for the winter so we can work on projects and do the annual cleaning. We are still available, though, to help you with research, answer your Silverton history questions or arrange special tours. Just call our Curator, Judy Lowery, at 503-873-3335 or Chris at 503-873-4529. See you in the Spring!!