

Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Over Forty Years of History in the Making



Museum and Office
428 South Water Street

In this issue of the newsletter we are continuing a three-part series on Silverton's Air Circus in 1920's. You will want to make sure your dues are current so you won't miss a word!

The Circus Comes to Silverton, The Air Circus That Is.....

Part 2

By Fred A. Parkinson

Weather on the day of the show was perfect for such an event, with warm, clear skies and little wind. The aerial competition was ready to go at 1:00 pm, complete with cash prizes and trophy cups awarded for each event. Local resident L.C. "Corey" Eastman, who acted as the announcer and director of events, kept the program moving along smoothly.

Paid attendees could view the various aircraft up close, as well as pay for a short hop in the air. Admission tickets also served as raffle tickets. One ticket number was drawn every hour, with the lucky winner receiving a free plane ride. Getting up close to the planes sometimes came at a cost, however. Plumes of dust wafted into the air as the planes rumbled by, preparing to take off. The guttural roar of the engines increased to a fever pitch as planes took to the sky. A report in the *Appeal* stated: "On the field the heavy clouds of dust stirred into the atmosphere by the zooming motors of the aeroplanes laid a fine mantle of dust over the hundreds of spectators who crowded too close about the planes."

Competitive events included both a ten mile and a forty mile air race, won by Dick and Tex Rankin, respectively. Another event was the "dead stick landing" contest which involved flying at an altitude of 3,000 feet and then killing the plane's engine. The pilot would then glide without engine or braking --power to land as close as possible to a pre-defined spot. Tex Rankin won this thrilling contest.

Both military and civilian pilots dazzled the crowd all afternoon, offering countless feats of aerial acrobatics including noteworthy nose dives, impressive Immelmann turns, terrifying tailspins, sophisticated side slips, and formation flying. The sights and sounds of flight abounded; biplanes apparently hanging suspended in midair, the throaty growl of their engines sputtering and cutting out as they tumbled back to earth, seemingly out of control, only to recover at the last second and swing back up into a loop.

The wing walker, Dick Rankin, electrified the crowd as he walked along both the lower and upper wings of a biplane piloted by his brother, Tex, as the plane performed countless exciting aerial maneuvers, including a dangerous loop-de-loop. Equally exhilarating, the parachute jump stirred the crowd to a wild level of excitement.



Continued on Page 3

Curator's Corner

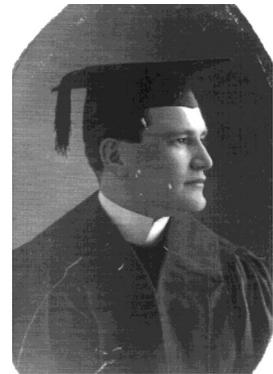
When Keene Satchwell donated his grandfather's, Dr. Clarence Keene, saddle bags we all were amazed. The thought of a young doctor saddling up his horse and going on 'house calls' is a wonderful picture. Dr. Keene was hired jointly by the Silver Falls Timber Company the Silverton Lumber Company to tend to the needs of their employees. In doing so he soon knew that there had to be a place that would allow him to give them proper care. Hence, he turned his own home into a 'hospital'. That hospital operated from 1914 to 1918. Dr. Keene was born in 1875 on a



French Prairie donation land claim that his father had established in 1850. Dr. Keene graduated from the University of Oregon Medical School in 1901 and began his practice in Canyon City, Oregon. In 1903 he married Minnie McClaine and they set off for him to do postgraduate work at Harvard followed by clinical studies in Liverpool, Berlin, Bologna and Vienna. When they returned from Europe in 1905, he practiced for a time in Portland, specializing in orthopedic surgery. They then moved to Silverton in 1911.



This is what I found to be so amazing. Even though he had married a local Silverton girl, his education could have taken him to many other places where he could have been far wealthier, but he chose to come to our town. In reading notes and newspaper articles, that is just the kind of man that he was. There are stories of him driving to a patient's home any staying with them through the night just so he would be close if there was a change during the night. Other stories tell of his compassion when it came time for pay for services. One such comment was that he charged based on what he knew the patient could or couldn't pay. His drive to keep up on the latest medical improvements was clearly his goal, and he did so until the very day he retired. He was a consummate country doctor who practiced medicine out of his love for his patients and the profession. So picturing Dr. Keene, riding to the mills to work on various logging injuries, turning his own home into the first hospital all makes perfect sense. A doctor with that kind of devotion to his profession would certainly have done anything possible to treat those in need.



One personal note, is that he delivered my mother and I can remember my grandfather near the end of his life saying that if only he could have Dr. Keene take a look at him. My mother was a nurse at Silverton Hospital for many years and there were still nurses and doctors there that had worked for and with him and to a man/woman they would all say the same thing: There was no one finer. The saddle bags are in the museum's Doctor's room and this year is the 100th anniversary of Silverton Hospital and they have 'traveled' there to be included in presentations given by Sarah Fronza, Legacy Silverton Medical Center's President, to show just how far medicine has come. We are so pleased to have this wonderful donation added to our museum and a special *thank you* to Keene for bringing it 'home'.

Judy Lowery



We're back!!

The Museum building (and the Depot) have nice new paint jobs, the bright red signs are back up and we are more than ready to welcome visitors! Come see us! There are many new displays and articles for you to see.

Continued from Page 1

The air circus continued into the early evening with only the onset of dusk bringing the day's activities to an end. Depending on which newspaper one read, attendance figures ranged from 8,000 to 12,000 spectators, more than twice the population of Silverton. These figures undoubtedly included not only those who paid the 25¢ admission on the field, but also the many sightseers who watched the proceedings off-site from their cars or who balanced high on roofs, barns, or other elevated places. One report indicated a line of parked cars stretched along the Mt. Angel Highway (now known as the Old Mt. Angel Highway to locals) all the way north to the Abiqua Bridge, a distance of about two miles.

After the show, the *Appeal* recounted: "It was a thrilling day for every one (sic) and the attentiveness of the thousands of spectators attested to their lively interest," while the *Tribune* stated: "The dedication and circus proved one of the biggest events that was ever pulled off in Silverton." Plans were soon underway to make the air circus an annual event.

The enthusiastic support of the first air circus was summed up a year later when the *Silverton Appeal* ran a story announcing plans for the second annual show to be held the weekend of June 23 and 24. The article stated: "The success of last year's air circus was so surprising in both attendance and in advertising Silverton, that the air circus has found a high place among the Legion's curriculum of activities, and has become an annual event."

New to the 1928 air circus was an air race or "derby," flying from Swan Island in Portland to Silverton on Saturday afternoon in which ten of the pilots scheduled to appear at the show participated. Several Silverton businesses sponsored trophies, another new addition. A newly constructed 85 x 30 foot, hangar greatly improved the airfield from the prior year. Finally, and perhaps most importantly for spectators, the airfield was now covered in sod. The *Tribune* informed: "The field this year is in excellent condition, and the spectators will not have to eat the dust as they did last year, the runways are in good shape and the field has been rolled and the grass is coming up in good shape."

A highlight of the weekend was the arrival of one of Tex Rankin's planes, a Ryan Brougham christened "*Queen of the Cascades*," a sister ship to Charles Lindbergh's "*Spirit of St. Louis*." A Bach "Air Yacht," a tri-motor, ten passenger aircraft, also made an appearance at the circus, the first of its kind to land at the Silverton airfield. Both aircraft offered passenger rides during the weekend.

In Part 3 the air shows end with an air tour.



What SCHS Has been up to!

On May 31, SCHS Participated in the Salem Culture and Heritage Forum which was held on the grounds of the State Capitol. We joined several other organizations, including Willamette Heritage Center, Deepwood, Friends of the Salem Pioneer Cemetery and many more. We had the opportunity to share Silverton history with visitors, as well as being able to learn more about the stories of other groups from around the area. Thank you to Fred and Gus for spearheading the display. We really enjoy these events as it lets us meet with people who might not know who we are.

Summer in Silverton 2018 Calendar Coming Events!

Historic Silver Falls Days, Silver Falls State Park—Saturday and Sunday, July 14th and 15th (Date corrected from last newsletter)—from 10 am to 4 pm

Old-fashioned games, storytelling, historic displays and reenactments, antique logging demonstrations. We will be there!

Second Annual Fisher Mill Music Fest—Saturday, July 21, 2018

At the Old Mill Park Amphitheater, behind the library parking lot on South Water Street. A great lineup of Bluegrass. Rock and Folk bands. All ages welcome, \$5 suggested donation. Food, and beverages will be available from local vendors. Bring the family for a picnic, bring your friends and a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy a warm summer afternoon and evening of great music beside Silver Creek!

Homer Davenport Community Festival—August 3,4,5

A celebration held in honor of all things Davenport and Silverton! Held in Coolidge McClaine Park

Special attraction: SCHS Dime Toss Booth!!!

Many thanks to the First Christian Church in Silverton and to Kimberley Smith, vendor at Blackbird Granary for their generous donations of glass pieces. And to others who have given anonymously — we thank you so very much! The Dime Toss is the largest fundraiser for the Historical Society and the big bonus is that everyone, volunteers and participants alike, have a wonderful time. See you there!



Our newsletter can be a lot of work—it isn't just put together by elves....or maybe it is! Here is a recent bunch (L to R): Barbara Dettwyler, Fred Parkinson, Susan Morgan and Gary Ohren. Other elf helpers not pictured: Judy Lowery, Chris Schwab, Norm English and any stray member who happens to drop by on Newsletter day! Thanks to all of you. (And we're not gossiping—if it's history, it is not gossip)

Trivia questions taken from 1991-92 Senior English Class issue of Fox Tymes.

How well do you know Silverton? By Raggie Clites

1. What is the longest straight street in town? (It runs true north and south.)
2. In what year did the first class of high school seniors graduate from the Schlador Street high school?
3. Can you guess the population of Silverton in 1894?
4. When and in what sport, did Silverton High School with its first State Championship?

1. James Street (At least in 1992)
2. 1940
3. 900
4. Silverton High School won the State Championship Basketball Tournament in 1909 in Corvallis.

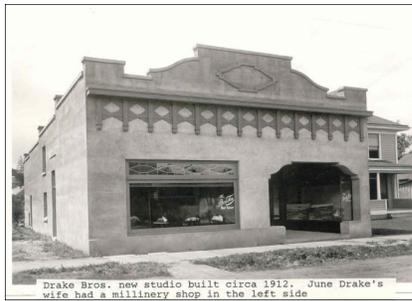
Next Group of Historic Pedestal Plaques

Throughout the City of Silverton are countless reminders of our heritage. Most obvious, of course, are our many historical buildings, both commercial and residential. Many have been fixtures in our community for well over a century. But what is their story? When were they built? And who was around then? To help answer these questions, SCHS has begun to erect a series of metal etched Photographic Pedestal Plaques, located throughout town, giving viewers an idea of what a specific vantage point was “back in the day,” from that very same view today.

We see these podium plaques offering a visual aspect to our history. Our community is blessed in that we have had numerous professional photographers who have documented our town. By drawing from these archives, we are able to provide old views to our modern reality. Pictured here is the next group of sites we would like to commemorate with an historic plaque. If you would like to sponsor a plaque, in full or partially (at least half), please contact the Historical Society at 503-873-7070 or silverton.museum@live.com. (The projected estimate per plaque is +/- \$800.)



Fischer Mill wagons lining S. Water Street
Sponsor: Jack Geer.

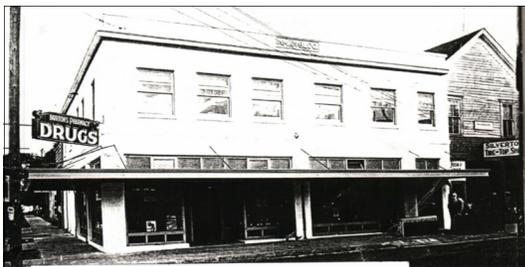


Drake Bros. new studio built circa 1912. June Drake's wife had a millinery shop in the left side

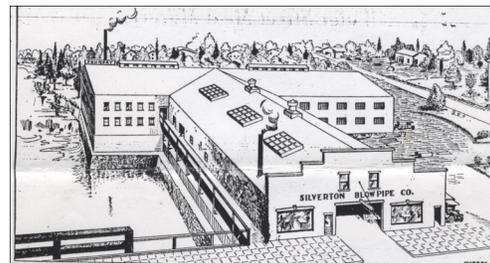
Drake Bros. Studio
Sponsorship available.



Anderson Hotel
Sponsorship available.



Inman Building (Corner of First and Oak)
Sponsorship available.



Silverton Blowpipe Factory
Sponsorship available.



Silverton Super Station
Sponsorship available.



The Gem Theater
Sponsorship available.



The Wray Building
Sponsorship available.



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Celebrating Over 40 Years in the Community

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**Thank you to our new and renewing members,
our generous donors and to anyone who has
given anonymously to the Museum or any of its projects.
You're the best!!—**

John Dahl Ray and Kathy Hunter Amy McKinley
Tom and Barbara Pelett Lisbeth Claus and Robert Hector
Tom and Lynne Radcliffe Thomas Stewart
Silver T Horseless Carriage Club

And thank you to Nancy Bleakney for her donation in memory of Jean Sacher.

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