

Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Over Forty Years of History in the Making



*Museum and Office
428 South Water Street*

This issue of the newsletter features the conclusion of the three-part series on Silverton's Air Circus in 1920's.

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

Part 3

By Fred A. Parkinson

The success of the first two aerial affairs led to a third competition in July 1929, somehow renamed the air "carnival" in advertising. The program was essentially the same as in prior years. The air derby and Aviation Ball were held on Saturday with the other distance races, formation flying, and stunt flying competitions taking place on Sunday. Sunday's activities were originally arranged to begin with a ceremony to dedicate the site of a soon-to-be-installed government navigational beacon at the landing field. Newspaper accounts vary, but in all probability, the ceremony never occurred, due to the unavailability of some out-of-town dignitaries, including the governor of Oregon. The beacon became operational after its installation in May 1930.

In addition to the appearance of Tex and Dick Rankin, notable participants in the 1929 event included Silverton resident and aviation enthusiast Alfred Adams, who made a respectable showing, coming in third in the dead stick landing contest. Lee Eyerly of Salem, who would be instrumental in establishing the Salem airport, won several trophies including first place in the air derby, the balloon bursting contest, and the twenty-mile free-for-all race, all in his home built monoplane.



The world had experienced extraordinary advances in aeronautics by 1930. Perhaps as a result of the onset of the Great Depression, no major airshow appeared on the schedule for 1930 until a group met in Portland to found the Pacific Northwest Air Tour Association. The group-- existed to promote aviation safety and reliability. Out of this effort, the inaugural Pacific Northwest Air Tour came about, to be piloted during the summer of 1930. Quoted in the July 18, 1930, *Silverton Tribune*, Russell Lawson, Vice-President of the National Aeronautical Association and chairman of the board of the newly formed tour organization, said: "This tour will help focus attention on airports, on the development of airplanes, and on the safety and reliability features of aviation."

The tour involved as many as fifty aircraft and required flying a route connecting twenty-two towns in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho over an eleven day period. Each day brought one noon and one night stop. In addition to a sponsorship fee, each community on the tour provided gas and oil for each airplane, as well as lodging for pilots. Airplanes were on static display at each stop, while several squadrons of aviators put on aerial demonstrations.

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Curator's Corner

Silver Falls State Park has hosted a wonderful weekend in July called the Historic Silver Falls Days and for the last several years Chris has put together a wonderful display centered around the museum's logging artifacts and the part that June Drake played in working to bring the falls into the state park system. The weekend of July 14th and 15th was a busy one for Chris and her volunteers, Ruth Kaser and Tracy Duerst, especially this year as a fire broke out at the eastern edge of the park. However, a little smoke did not dampen the spirits of those attending and of our wonderful museum volunteers.



Judy Lowery

A few years ago I helped Chris set up the display and was amazed at the number of people who walked by and took time to visit with us about our part of the history of the park. Many of those who visit the park are there for family reunions, weddings, camping with family and friends or just to cool off in the swimming hole and are unaware of the park's history. There are also quite a few folks who visit from other parts of our state or are from out of state and are not aware of the impact that area played on the surrounding towns. The logging that was done before 1933, the year that the falls became a state park, was a huge part of the development of Silverton. Two large and successful lumber companies had their headquarters in Silverton and lumber from those mills was sold to many parts of the country and overseas. For the first event, Carolyn Hutton did a beautiful job of putting together a large map that shows the small town that grew up around the logging near the falls and also the area of the mills, all of which are no longer in existence.

Chris did mention that Sunday was a rather slow day since the news had warned people about the fire and not to go to the park until the fire was under control, so the foot traffic was greatly cut back that day. I was hosting at the museum on Saturday and had a couple who were visiting from California come into the museum with pictures of the logging dated 1923 that belonged to the family. They had been to the falls and had a chance to walk through the display and were very complimentary about the museum's ability to put together such an informative display. We have Chris to thank you doing this year after year.

I highly encourage any of you who are able to plan on attending next year's celebration. This year's weekend events included music, logging demonstrations, canoe races and more. It is a wonderful weekend to see what life was like before the falls became a state park.



SCHS Display in the
Main Lodge



The Main Lodge at
The Park



J.R. Beaver, mascot of the Junior
Ranger Program

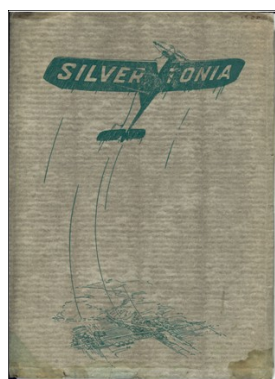


Silver T Horseless
Carriage Club

Continued from Page 1

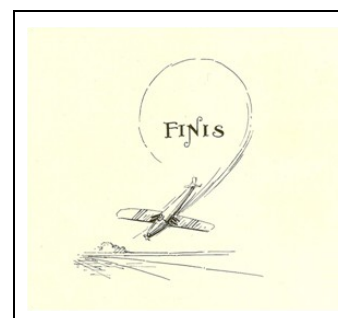
Planes took off from Pearson Airfield in Vancouver, Washington on July 29, 1930, to kick off the tour. Silverton, the sixteenth stop on the tour, hosted twenty-three planes at noon on August 5. Participants that day included Al Adams, Lee Eyerly, the Rankin brothers, and a nineteen-year-old Rankin student and aerial acrobatics phenom, Dorothy Hester, who would go on to have a distinguished career in aviation. Hester and Tex Rankin performed together toward the end of the demonstration. On August 8, 1930, the first issue of the newly merged *Silverton Appeal-Tribune* reported: "Once in the air, however, Rankin and Hester gave the crowd a number of thrills. Immelman (sic) turns, loops, slow rolls, half rolls, wingovers, and inverted flying over the field were some of the chocolate coated exhibitions offered to the crowd below." The last planes took off from Silverton at 4:00 pm en route to Corvallis for a night stop. After a grueling eleven-day schedule covering 1,765 miles, the tour finally ended on August 8 in Port Angeles, Washington.

With the end of the 1930 Pacific Northwest Air Tour, Silverton saw its last major aerial display for many years. It wasn't until 1947 that a major airshow, featuring exclusively local flyers, would be held at the Silverton Airport, complete with a new generation of aircraft.



Exploits of visionaries such as Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, and Tex Rankin generated intense interest in all things aviation in towns all over the United States.

Silverton was no exception. In fact, the Silverton High School yearbook, *Silvertonia*, took on an imaginative aviation focused theme for its 1928 edition. In addition, businesses around town sponsored several aeronautically inspired newspaper ads at the time of the airshows. By the end of the 1920s, a former loganberry patch on the outskirts of Silverton had been transformed into one of the top landing fields in the entire state. For several years, much like the traditional circus that came before it, the air circus provided Silverton residents with performances

Last page of 1928 *Silvertonia*

unlike any other, with attendance exceeding those of all other activities in town history; a feat perhaps unmatched to this day.



We are so pleased to be able to show off the Museum with its new paint job and its signage back in place. And we are happy to welcome everyone to take a look at the newly restored and painted Observation Post and its refurbished informational sign. Lots to see at the Museum this summer!

Fischer Mill Music Festival!

Outstanding weather, excellent music, a Zen Faire, pizza, hot dogs, beer—what more could you want on a lazy Saturday afternoon? The Historical society's own Victor Madge and Corey Christensen made sure everything ran smoothly and even had a little time to enjoy themselves! The Museum benefited as well, with an almost record number of visitors for a what could have been a random Saturday in July. Our display on the scene of the activities was a popular spot to visit as well, and several people were willing to try to answer a Silverton history question with a chance to win a prize.

The Filthy Skillets!!!



Getting Ready For The Next Group Of Historic Pedestal Plaques

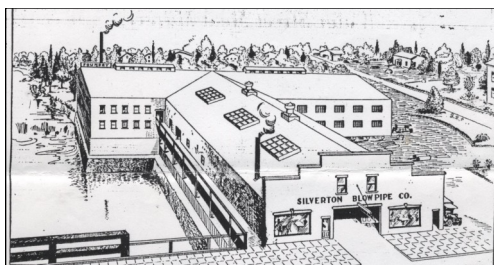
The Historical Society has identified eight more sites that we will soon be commemorating with an historic plaque. So far we have patrons or sponsors for four. The remaining sites are pictured below. If you would like to sponsor a plaque, in full or partially (at least half), please get in touch with a board member or contact the Historical Society at 503-873-7070 or email us at: silverton.museum@live.com. The projected cost per plaque is \$800. If you have a particular Silverton icon that you do not see pictured here, but one that you would like to help memorialize, contact us. If we can locate a good image it may be a candidate.



Anderson Hotel



Inman Building (Corner of First and Oak)



Silverton Blowpipe Factory



The Wray Building

Homer Davenport Community Festival—August 3, 4, 5

A celebration held in honor of all things Davenport and Silverton! Held in Coolidge McClaine Park!
For more information, go to: <http://homerdavenport.com/>



Special attraction: SCHS Dime Toss Booth!!!

This year might prove to be our best year yet! We have collected dozens of lovely pieces of glassware for you to try to take home.....and have tons of fun in the process. Thanks again to all who have donated glassware over the past few months. And, there might still be some slots open if you would like to help out in the booth and give your “inner carnival barker” a chance to express itself! I guarantee a good time!

Davenport Races: Fun Fact!

The use of the term “davenport” for a sofa or couch began around 1900, when the Cambridge, Massachusetts furniture manufacturer A.H. Davenport Co., created the now iconic boxy sofa. The founder, Albert H. Davenport (1845-1905) was in fact Homer Davenport’s distant cousin, five-times removed. Both were direct descendants of Thomas Davenport (1615-1685), who arrived in Dorchester, Massachusetts from England in 1635. (Thanks for this, Gus Frederick!)





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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!!—**

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