

# Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974  
Over Forty Years of History in the Making



Museum and Office  
428 South Water Street

## Homer Davenport Community Festival August 2, 3, 4, 2019

Join Your Historical Society as Silverton honors one of its favorite citizens ---  
Homer Davenport!

Make the most of the festival by visiting our fundraiser Dime Toss Booth and pitch a  
dime or two to win that great piece of glassware!

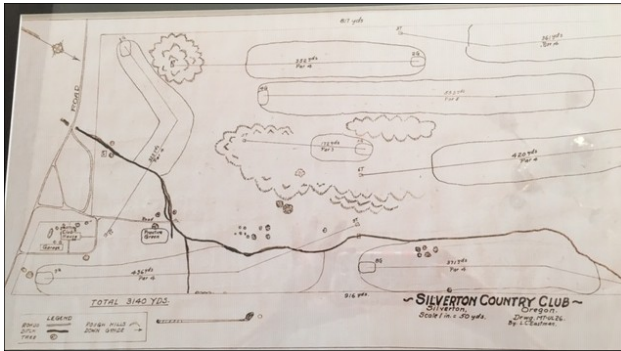
Even better -- volunteer to help in the booth and really share in the fun.

Call Chris at 503-551-3120 if you'd like to help.

See you there!!



### Curator's Corner



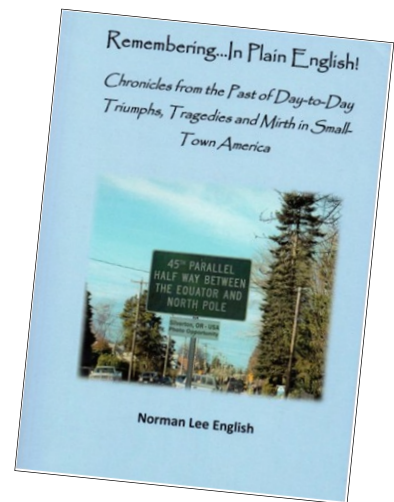
Interested? Read more about this latest acquisition in the next newsletter. *Judy Lowery*

### Book signing at the Museum Saturday and Sunday, August 3 and 4, 2019, 1 to 4 pm Readings at 2:30 each day

SCHS Past-President and Silverton author Norman Lee English will be signing his recently released book:

#### Remembering...In Plain English!

This is a true-life account of a small-town youngster from a working-class family living a life replete with love, humor and devotion to neighbors, family and friends, devoid of luxury. Interwoven into this chronicle are a number of historical references to other happenings within the small community of Silverton, Oregon, as well as in the greater world. It provides an illustration of the way life was in simpler times, eventually melding into the challenges of the current day. Includes a number of photographs and an extensive Silverton Timeline.



*Books are \$29.95 each with \$4 to go to the Museum*

### First Friday, June 7 at the Museum

Judith Sanders Chapman and Lois E. Helvey Rey signed copies of their new book, **“Wilhoit Springs - Molalla’s Last Resort.”** We will have copies for sale here at the Museum soon.



## The Hubbs-Larsen Desk

By Fred A. Parkinson  
July 2019

What do you do when you have two very large and similar pieces of furniture in the museum; one that needs to be moved upstairs and the other brought in through the front door? Naturally, you call on two intrepid volunteers: SCHS Curator Judy Lowery and SCHS Secretary Chris Schwab, who recently did just that.

Several months ago we received word of a rather large donation coming our way from Portland residents Gail and Bob Joseph. While we always appreciate cash donations, "large" in this case indicated physical size, for the planned donation was an immense roll-top desk with ties to a long established Silverton business.

A man named Perry Burch, along with partner and son-in-law, George W. Hubbs, established a real estate and insurance business in 1902 known as the Burch, Hubbs, and Co., at a creekside location that was little more than a wooden shack at the intersection of South Water and East Main Streets. As the firm grew, its location changed to meet increasing needs; first to 105 N. Water Street for sixteen years in part of the space most recently occupied by O'Brien's Restaurant and then a brief stay in a building owned by Coolidge and McClaine Bank before relocating to a more permanent office in the front section of the Steelhammer building located on East Main Street, where the firm remained from about 1920 until 1936.



Hubbs-Larsen desk in its new home

In 1906, a few years after Burch-Hubbs moved from its first location, the second bank established in Silverton, known as the People's Bank, began operations in a brand new building constructed by Louis Ames at the same South Water-East Main Street location where the Burch, Hubbs Company had originated. The bank eventually became the First National Bank of Silverton, but ultimately fell victim to the Great Depression by failing in the early 1930s.

By 1936 Perry Burch had long since passed away and the company was known as the George W. Hubbs Co. The old People's Bank building became available, so the firm moved into 100 South Water Street in July 1936, where it remained in one form or another on the most prominent intersection in town, complete with a distinctive neon sign, until 2016. The company continues to this day, under its present name, in another location.

Around 1940, a young Silverton man, Lloyd B. Larsen, established his own insurance firm in Silverton. After selling insurance in Silverton for sixteen years, he decided in 1956 to return to his former industry, logging and timber. He sold his policies to the George W. Hubbs Co., now run by George Hubbs's son, Max, since his father's passing in 1950. After operating a lumber mill in northern California for a number of years, Larsen again entered the insurance industry by joining the George W. Hubbs Company in late 1961. He flourished in his new position and in 1966 he and Max Hubbs organized a new offshoot of the George W. Hubbs Company, the Hubbs-Larsen Company with Lloyd as operating manager. Apparently, Larsen soon bought the company and Max Hubbs relocated to California where he died in 1968.



After several years of operating as Lloyd B. Larsen Insurance, Lloyd brought partner Dale Flynn into the firm and by 1975 had renamed the company Larsen-Flynn Insurance, the name under which the firm operates to this day. Larsen retired in 1977 and died in 1988.

After Larsen's death, Bob Joseph, his daughter Gail's husband, inherited the old roll-top desk that had been in continuous use at the insurance firm since the early 1900s. It's not known exactly when the desk first came into use at the company, but it was certainly in use by the 1920s, if not earlier.

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Bob was an attorney working at Schwabe, Williamson, and Wyatt, a prominent Portland law firm. He installed the desk in his Portland office where he used it for around thirty years. Bob related recently that he had several colleagues ask why, during the years he used the desk, he had never had it refinished. His reply was that he wanted to maintain the desk's authenticity by preserving its patina and normal wear and tear of those who had used it. As they eased into retirement, the Joseph family thought that it was time for the old desk to come "home."



At issue in the museum was "where will we put the new desk?" We already had a vintage roll-top desk in the living room owned by long-time Silverton physician, Dr. Rudolph E. Kleinsorge. Almost as soon as the question was asked, the answer became crystal clear: We have an upstairs area designated as the Doctors/Hospital room that would be a perfect place to relocate the desk since it was used by an early long-time Silverton physician. Of course, the question then became, "How in the world are we going to get that big desk upstairs?"

Cue the two intrepid volunteers..... Chris and Judy, aided by volunteer Gary Ohren, ultimately figured out how to disassemble the desk. On a quiet Sunday afternoon in May, Chris and Judy hauled the desk upstairs, piece by piece, and then put it back together in the Doctor's' room, a feat worthy of high praise. Not only did they save the historical society several hundred dollars in moving costs if professional movers had been used, they also cleared space in the living room for the incoming Hubbs-Larsen desk. (Ed, Note: No vintage desks or vintage volunteers were harmed in the process!)



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It arrived from Portland a week and a half later, followed almost immediately by Gail and Bob Joseph. It was questionable whether or not the padded, shrink wrapped, piece of furniture would fit through the museum's front door. All doubt was soon removed when the movers, assisted by Chris and supervised by Judy, moved the desk up the steep front porch steps and on through the front door to its new home with an inch to spare. The desk is now the first object one sees upon entering the museum's living room, on full display, complete with ephemera exhibited relating to the George W. Hubbs Company.

We offer many thanks to Gail and Bob Joseph for their generous contribution to Silverton's history. With roots dating to 1902, the firm that in 1937 celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> year in business as the second longest established company in town continues to operate to this day as Larsen-Flynn Insurance, a status that may identify it as the current longest-running business in Silverton.

In one of those remarkable historical coincidences that appear from time to time, John Schwabe, the "Schwabe" of the Schwabe, Williamson and Wyatt law firm, where the desk went to live in the late 1980s, actually began his law career in none other than Silverton, Oregon, from about 1950 to 1953. His office was at 100 South Water Street in the same location then occupied by a firm known as the George W. Hubbs Company.

The desk has seemingly come full circle, originating in Silverton, transplanted to Portland, but with a constant reminder of its roots, and then moved back to Silverton, where it now rests in a place of honor in our museum.





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*Celebrating Over 40 Years in the Community*

**WWW.SILVERTONMUSEUM.ORG**

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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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**Donation in Memory of Arthur Sacher**  
Nancy Bleakney

**We are so grateful for the support of all our members and donors!!**



*See you at the Homer Davenport  
Community Festival!!*

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your prompt response.  
Thank you!**