

Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Over Forty-five Years of History in the Making



Museum and Office
428 South Water Street

Veering off from Silverton (a bit)

By Fred A. Parkinson

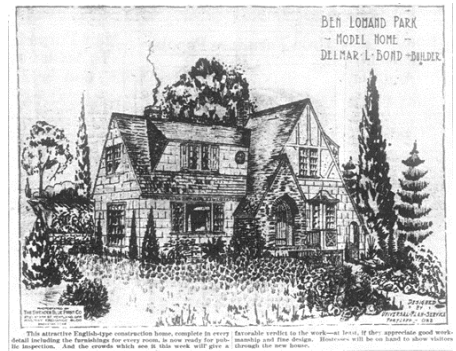
And now, for something a little different

Once again, simple research into a topic for an upcoming newsletter article takes an unexpected turn, veering away from the specific subject to a much broader, yet very satisfying result. While this outcome yielded information with only a peripheral relationship to Silverton, the situation can be appreciated by those in Silverton seeking similar material.

The plan was to write an updated article on one of Silverton’s high-profile vintage firms. This company, first known as the Silverton Blow Pipe Company and later Eastman Brothers Inc., dissolved in 1946, although a new company, the Eastman Metal Works would be formed in 1946 by a family member and would continue in some form to the present day. The article is still in the works, since the research needed to put the piece together is essentially done. It will be an interesting article, noting the five distinct buildings the company had occupied during its thirty-eight years of service, that, sadly, no longer exist. But that’s a story for another time.....

While doing research on the company’s products, and armed with a new, full-featured, subscription to Newspapers.com, a June 1929 news item was found concerning one of Eastman’s products called the Armor Plate furnace, a high-tech furnace for its era. While reading the comprehensive article about the furnace, the surrounding stories on the page were noticed, several dealing with various aspects of housing construction and furnishing. It turns out the articles were part of a special eight-page section of the Oregon Statesman newspaper that featured a newly-built, fully furnished, model home on display for the first time in a new south Salem housing development called Ben Lomond Park.

The new Eastman Brothers furnace was installed in the basement of the model home. The article noted: **“The Armor Plate furnace, developed by Eastman Brothers, is the result of 25 years of study and experience in warm air heating, the last 10 years of which they have built their own furnaces.”** The article was also very complimentary, stating: **“The Ben Lomond Park home, built by Mr. Bond, is equipped with only the best in each line of building material and equipment and the Armor Plate was selected only after a thorough study of all furnaces offered.”**



An architect’s rendering of the house was displayed prominently on the section’s first page. Articles dealt with every aspect of the house, from its many unique features to the up-to-date kitchen and everything in between. It was truly an amazing collection of information about what is now considered to be a vintage house, but to those reading in 1929, it was a huge collection of current building techniques and trends.

Of special note is the one-of-a-kind living room fireplace, fashioned by mason E. R. Viesko. A photo was found showing the fireplace today after a deep cleaning. It was only after seeing this photo that a photo in the newspaper was noticed that depicted a living room scene featuring the same fireplace, but was hard to see due to the way the original image transferred to microfilm. A lot of detail is lost in photos reproduced from microfilm.

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Curator's Corner



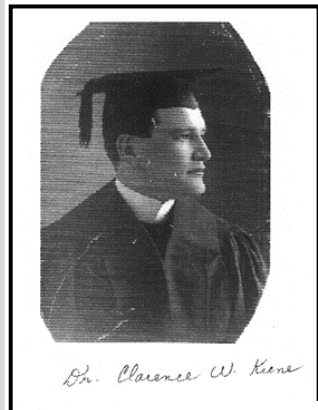
Once again we will be hosting third grade classes for tours this spring. Three classes will visit on June 5th and as of this newsletter date these are the only classes that have booked a so far. The last tours that we had hosted were held in 2019 and after such a long 'time out' it will probably take a while for those visitations to begin again. One of the purposes of the society is to work as an educational source



and these school tours are a perfect match. Many of the teachers have had their students write thank you letters to the museum as a writing project post the tour.

Another 'once again' happening is that we will have an exhibit at Willamette Heritage Center. This will be the first time that we have had the opportunity to install a display since 2020. This year the theme is: 'To Your Health!' We will be sharing Dr. Keene's medical saddle bags that were recently donated to the museum by a family member. These unique saddle bags are still filled with vials of the medications that he used as he ministered

to the loggers and mill workers of the Silver Falls Timber Company. For those of you who may not know and for those of you who do remember Dr. Keene's legacy, he was very much an amazing addition to the health and welfare of our small town's medical history. This highly distinguished, and much loved doctor



by the Silverton community, was hired by the Silver Falls Timber Company in 1914. The timber company needed a doctor to tend to the loggers and mill workers. He soon became known as 'the Mill Doctor.' He used the saddle bags, filled with medical necessities, as he rode from his home to the logging sites. He soon became aware of the need for an adequate hospital facility, so he purchased a two story house on Oak Street which served as a family home on the second floor and as a hospital on the first floor. (The home still stands at 602 Oak Street.) The Keene hospital served the community until a new one was built in 1918.



The exhibit will be open to the public from June 2, 2023 until October 7, 2023 at the Willamette Heritage Center, 1313 Mill Street SE in Salem.

Judy Lowery

Terry Caster
April 7, 1943—April 20, 2023
Terry lived almost all his life in Silverton touching the lives of so very many people. He and Patty only joined the historical society recently, but Terry is definitely a part of Silverton history. His movie star good looks and his positive attitude made a lasting impression on everyone he met. Our condolences go out to his family.

Veering off from Silverton (a bit) *Continued from page 1*

The 1929 newspaper section contained 34 separate articles, including eleven photos and illustrations, that highlighted such esoteric features as the foundation work, use of climbing vines in the landscape, types of faucet hardware, excavation work (the home was built on a sloped lot), and the new brocaded walls, what we refer to today as textured walls, but in 1929 was a new concept. Profiles of the builder, as well as mention of the architect and even the insurance provider enhanced the coverage as well. Perhaps the most unusual fact of all is the origin of the “Ben Lomond” name, which is not a person as might be thought, but a mountain in the Scottish Highlands.

After seeing the wealth of information available on this house, it was decided to see if the house still exists today. Although the general location was given as south Salem, the specific location wasn’t readily apparent until a small box was noticed on an interior page that provided driving directions.

Armed with those instructions, and with the house drawing for reference, Google maps street view was used to “drive” up the street until the house was found. The map indicated the street number of the house so it was easy to consult the Marion County Assessor’s web site to find public information about the house. It was dismaying to find the home’s construction date was listed as 1938 and not 1929, so it couldn’t be the house depicted in those 1929 articles.

In any event, contacting the owners of the property seemed like a reasonable thing to do. It was thought that even if the house in the paper wasn’t theirs, it was similar enough to be of some value. A call was placed to one of the owners, who called back after a message had been left. It turns out the owner was very excited to get the information found. The discrepancy in build dates was discussed. It turns out that the same question regarding the date had somehow come up during the owner’s discussions about the house. After consulting a database available through Willamette Heritage Center, they found the house had first sold in October 1929, indicating the county might have the wrong build date in their records.



Perhaps more important than an incorrect date in a county database was the fact that the house profiled in the paper was indeed theirs, with its tremendous wealth of information about the house when it was originally built. Imagine finding such a treasure trove of information for any of Silverton’s historic homes! There are a couple of magazine write-ups on file at the museum regarding Silverton homes of the past, but the amount of information included in them is nowhere near the amount included in the Statesman’s newspaper section. The Adams house on West Main Street, owned by Ron and Jane Jones, was profiled in the *Arts & Crafts Homes and the Revival* magazine in the Early Summer 2009 issue after some restoration was done and the former “Pink Corner” house on James Street was profiled in *The American Home* magazine in the September 1958 issue. While it was a relatively contemporary house, built in 1941, that article contained timely information on the family’s remodeling efforts and 1950s housing trends.

It was exciting to come across a random article that provided such an unusual turn of events. Even though this endeavor didn’t deal specifically with Silverton history, nonetheless, it was quite satisfying to connect with the current owners who appreciated the wealth of information provided about their home, information that very few owners of vintage homes today can obtain. It has been said that every house tells a story. It would be fascinating to know this house’s story after it was initially sold which, by the way, occurred on “Black Tuesday,” October 29, 1929, an infamous date that was the prelude to the Great Depression. How the original owners of the house weathered the Depression would be a compelling story in itself. Oh, if those walls could talk!

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You, too, can become a part of stories like this—sign up to volunteer with the Silverton Country Historical Society. Help keep the Museum open and its resources available to the public by being a weekend host. Work with trained volunteers to use Museum archives to help people learn more about family histories or old house backgrounds. Call us at **503-873-7070** or email us at silverton.museum@live.com

Summer's Coming!



That means the Homer Davenport Community Festival is set for August 4, 5 and 6. And THAT means, your Historical Society is once again ready to sponsor its annual fundraiser—The Dime Toss!

We would like your beloved extra glassware, your garage sale leftovers, your cupboard cleaning discards. You can drop items off on the Museum porch anytime, but FYI, there is someone at the museum Tuesday mornings and of course we are open Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 pm if you'd like to come in and say "Hi."



We look forward to this event every yearand if YOU would like to be part of the fun, we are always in need of volunteers to help encourage festival visitors to try toss a dime, or more, and win a fabulous prize. (Well, they get to keep the glassware.....OR if they prefer, they can enter their name in a drawing to win a cash prize instead!) You have supported us tremendously in the past—thank you so much! See you again in August!

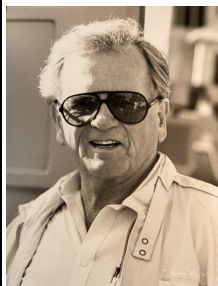


Visitors Rand and Sandra Hall from Quilcene, Washington, came by the Museum to learn about some of their ancestors, a branch of the Warnock family, who lived in the Museum's house when it was still located on Main Street. They were a great couple and were so grateful for the information we found. We hope to see them back here this summer!



Edward "Jack" Geer

June 9, 1929—July 6, 2021




We were saddened to only recently learn of the passing of one of our favorite supporters, Jack Geer. Jack grew up in Silverton and graduated from Oregon State University in 1952 with a degree in Engineering. He served in the Army during the Korean War and also in Heidelberg, Germany, remaining in the Army reserves until 1989.



Jack went on to a successful career building bridges, power houses and high rises. He was very proud of the fact that his father, Lester Geer, served as an early projectionist at the Palace theater—there is a plaque honoring him on the box office. Jack shared his love of Silverton by sponsoring four of our pedestal plaques. We are very honored that Jack donated his full Army uniform which is included in our Veteran's exhibit in every November.

Gus Frederick—Local Infidels: Oregon Freethinkers


Gus presented a program on Silverton’s Liberal University of Oregon. The program was held at the Silver Falls Library in April.

Faculty of Liberal University of Oregon, 1899
Image courtesy of Silverton Country Historical Society

What is the Freethought movement in Oregon and how did it impact Silverton? Gus Frederick will talk about this late 19th century movement which culminated in the establishment of the Liberal University of Oregon at Silverton. He will also discuss the wider national scene of this period, with its diverse universe of men and women and their varying concepts and ideas.

Silver Falls Library
Thursday
April 13, 2023
6:30 PM



Liberal University of Oregon building, 1897
Illustration by Samuel Ames

**Local Infidels:
Oregon Freethinkers**
presented by Gus Frederick

410 S. WATER ST. SILVERTON, OR ☎ 503-873-8716 🌐 www.silverfallslibrary.org

Once again the Museum acted as a stop on the Salem Auto Club Council’s annual Cherry Blossom Drive and Poker Run on Sunday, April 15. We added our own special touch to the event by having another vintage book sale. We love this event, as we meet the nicest people, see some awesome cars and sell a few books! See you next year!



If you think things don’t change much at the Museum, come take a look at what we have been up to!



New bedroom and toy room displays!!



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EMAIL US
SILVERTON.MUSEUM@LIVE.COM

Celebrating Over 45 Years in the Community

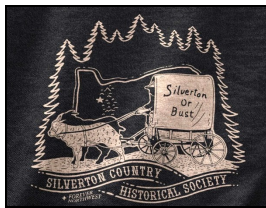
WWW.SILVERTONMUSEUM.ORG

**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!!

Kristi Curtin	Pennie Day	Susy Riches
Pamela Raymond	Carrie Caster	Barbara Renback
Lance Kamstra	John Dahl	Lois Ray
Dawn Juliano	Donovan Harding	Phyllis Bolton
Tracy and Douglas Duerst		Ray and Kathy Hunter
Ricky and Kelli Burbage		Tim and Cheryl Erickson
Sally and Mike Gauvin		Kin and Candace Haakenson
	Walt and Pamela Pelett	

Pamela Raymond—*In remembrance of John W. Riches who was born in
the home that houses the SCHS museum*



We still have two of our
awesome green t-shirts
left from our sale—one
medium and one large.
Give us a call at
503-873-7070 if you
would like one — \$25ea

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Vacant	Past-Pres.
Fred Parkinson	Vice-Pres.
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**If you received an
overdue notice with your
newsletter, we appreciate
your prompt response.
Thank you!**