

Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Over Forty-five Years of History in the Making



Museum and Office
428 South Water Street

The Silverton Blow Pipe Company

Part 1 “The Early Years”

By Fred A. Parkinson

No company in Silverton’s past is perhaps better-known than Eastman Heating and Cooling. The company has been doing business in Silverton since 1946, known at first as the Eastman Metal Works and then morphing through the years to become a full-service heating, air conditioning, and electrical company. But some may not know that Eastman’s Heating and Cooling is not the first company started by the Eastman family.

Silverton was at the forefront of an economic boom occurring in the early 20th century. In 1907, a new lumber mill was built by the Silverton Lumber Company to take advantage of the abundant timber available in the surrounding area. New ventilation equipment, known as a blowpipe system, was installed by a company from Portland. Two brothers, L. C. (known as Corey) and Austin Eastman, originally from Castle Rock, Washington, were on the installation crew. They were on the job in Silverton for some time and from what they saw of Silverton, they liked. That, in combination with the overall economic uncertainty caused by the Panic of 1907, allowed the brothers to strike out on their own in Silverton. Corey purchased the plumbing and tinning business of P. L. Blackerby, situated in the 100 block of South Water Street, in March 1908. It appears that Austin had joined his brother in Silverton in 1911. The primary thrust of the business in the early days was their blow pipe systems, heating, and plumbing, with the associated sheet metal work. One of their high-profile furnace installations occurred in September 1908 in the house under construction for Dr. Murton DeGuire, a well-known dentist, jeweler, and later, dairyman.



The plumbing and sheet metal business picked up slowly, but steadily, during the early years. This required planning for an eventual larger facility, a trend that would be repeated several times during the company’s existence. A larger building would allow the company to diversify into other areas of manufacturing and service. The April 7, 1911, *Silvertonian Appeal* announced in an article headlined: **“To Deal in Automobiles”** L. C. Eastman and a partner planned to erect a 40 x 60 ft. building in the 200 block of South Water Street that would house an automobile repair shop and garage. This location was in the middle of the block across from the current Hartman Building. The Silverton Blow Pipe Company would also operate out of the new building. They moved into the new shop on May 16, 1911. The garage was ready for business about three weeks later. The business featured a free air hose to fill automobile or bicycle tires at the front curb. The company remained at that location for a few years.

Meanwhile, in 1914, Eastman decided to build a substantial new cement building on West Main Street just across the bridge. This building measured 50 x 100 ft. and included a full basement..

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Curator's Corner

Selah Springs

Guest author—Jeff Brekas

Curiosity about the approximately 113 year old cement cistern at Selah Mineral Springs on the Pudding River about five miles west of Silverton got the best of me so I messaged longtime farmers Bernie and Margaret Dettwyler and requested a tour. The couple graciously agreed, and on Saturday, July 29 their niece Rosanne Dettwyler, Society director Jeff Marcoe and myself joined them for a fascinating late afternoon country excursion.



Bernie showed us the four-foot square, four and one-half foot high structure all intact, although overgrown with grasses. Present were two pipes protruding horizontally from the west side of the 20-foot well as described in earlier writings.

In 1978 Olive Ottaway (1895-1993) of Selah Springs Road recalled a proprietor began selling water from the springs in 1904. At the time, newspapers referred to the site as simply "soda springs."

It was April 1, 1910 when Samuel Ames of Silverton and French-Canadian John W. Whitlock purchased E.E. Taylor's and a man named Meeker's interest in the 85-acre property and commenced to build a bottling plant. Son Norris Ames (1889-1992) and two others went to Portland to obtain the "finest" equipment for the operation to produce what was referred to as "pop." Soon, sons Carelton and Wendle Whitlock began bottling and selling the soda water produced in the new platformed structure up the bank and to the south of the cistern.



Labels advertised the product as "an excellent septic for all kidney, liver and stomach troubles." Testing determined the percentage of ingredients as 0.95 silica, 4.44 iron and alumina, 11.26 sodium and potassium, 9.62 lime, 4.67 magnesia, 4.79 sulphuric acid, 2.98 carbon dioxide, 11.10 chlorine, 17.49 volatile matter and 64.53 mineral matter. Artificial flavoring and carbonation was added. The bottling methods were unique to the Pacific Northwest. Many thought the mineral water was unsurpassed for table blends that went perfectly with wines and liquors. Examples of the bottles can be found in the Silverton Country Museum.

Soon, land clearing began to make way for a pavilion, tents for campers, swings, picnic seating, etcetera. Whitlock, Ames and Meekers even brought in hotel equipment for Mineral baths. The project attracted hundreds of campers for the mid-July and beyond resort season. Most came via the Southern Pacific Railroad's "old skunk train" that likely stopped at a point yards east of the Little Switzerland station at Desert Road to be adjacent to the spring location. Pratum, to the west, was once known as Little Switzerland due to the German-Swiss population settled in the area. Little Switzerland featured a large hop barn immediately west of Desert Road.

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Judy Lowery

Walt Pelett (1933—2023)

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Walt Pelett of City Liquidators. Walt attended Eugene Field School as a boy and retained a love of Silverton that lasted his whole life. He was a very dear friend of the Historical Society and visited the area and the Museum several times. He will be truly missed.



Continued from page 1

The Silverton Blow Pipe Company

Part 1 "The Early Years" - Continued

The Eastman Garage and the Silverton Blow Pipe company moved into the building in mid-1914 as profiled in an end-of-year write-up in the December 18, 1914 *Silverton Appeal*. In addition to the company's core mission of ventilation, plumbing, heating, and sheet metal work, the business was augmented by the services of the garage. These included automobile service and repair, bicycle repair, and motorcycle sales and repair. They became the local agent for Indian motorcycles.

Details are uncertain, but it is likely that with the plumbing, heating, and sheet metal portions of the company taking off, the need to augment the business with a garage was lessened. At some point, the building was leased to another person to operate a garage while the Silverton Blow Pipe Company moved to another location while retaining ownership of the building.

In early 1917, Sam Ames, a prominent local businessman, erected a one-story, 30 x 75 ft. galvanized iron building on Oak Street to house the Silverton Blow Pipe Company. Once again, support for the firm had progressed to the point of requiring a new facility. The company moved into their new Oak Street location in February 1917.

Through sustained growth, the company's reputation in the industry continued to expand well beyond the borders of Silverton. The Silverton Blowpipe Company became known throughout the Willamette Valley as a well-run concern, with quality management and innovative products.

With continued expansion always in the mix, the company purchased property in March 1919 on North Water Street next to the Gem Theater, now The Red Bench, as a future building site for the business. Apparently plans changed because six weeks later the paper announced the Silverton Blow Pipe Company was planning to move back to their "old quarters" on West Main Street they had occupied until February 1917. They moved back into their facility on May 1, 1919. The garage moved out, allowing the company to utilize the entire building, space they needed because of the huge influx of orders for the new "Hades" furnace. The North Water Street property was sold in October 1919 to Dr. A. E. Wrightman and Fred Uphoff to build a garage. That building today houses the Thai Dish restaurant and the North Star Antiques and Collectables store.

For the first ten years of its existence, the brothers installed furnaces manufactured by their former employer. In the late 1910s, with over 15 years of industry experience, ten years of them in Silverton, a revolutionary new furnace was developed that became known as the "Ford of the furnace world," allowing those of modest means to put one in their home. The intent was to manufacture a furnace that provided service and durability, with no frills, while providing the most efficient heat dispersal possible. The new furnace, dubbed the "Hades Pipeless Furnace," was an instant hit due to its low price and high quality. The local paper reported **"Orders and inquiries are now coming from all parts of the state and it is now a question of getting the material and workmen fast enough to fill the demand."** Unfortunately, another company already had a furnace on the market called "The Hades," requiring the Eastman furnace to change its name.

"We Will Pay \$25 For One Word" read the display ad, with an accompanying news item, in the November 28, 1919 *Silverton Appeal*. A two-week-long contest was held to find the furnace's new designation. The public was asked to contribute a word not in the dictionary and for which a copyright could be secured. The winning entry would win \$25, worth around \$430 in 2023 dollars. The contest was a phenomenal success. More than 800 entries were received, encompassing over 2,200 suggestions. Although many entries were contributed by Silverton residents, the winning word, **"Sibloco,"** a clever use of the first syllables of the company name, was submitted by two people from Portland, who split the \$25 prize.



Next up: **Part 2 "Expansion and Innovation"**

Another Successful Dime toss and Fun-filled Homer Davenport days!!

First we set up the booth.....



Then we wait to see the nicest people!



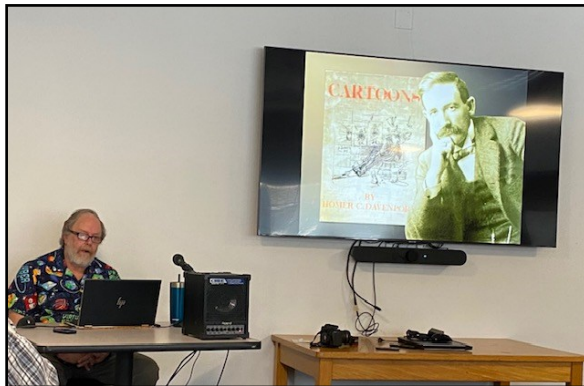
Exciting Event at the Library as well—



The Unveiling of the new Fischer Mill Mural by Artist Tonya Jo Smithburg.



More Homer Davenport Events!



How lucky our community is to have two of our best Historians discuss their favorite topics at the Silver Falls Library! On the Saturday of the Homer Davenport Community Festival, Gus Frederick shared “Who the Heck is Homer Davenport” and Fred Parkinson gave a history of Fischer’s Flour Mill, in honor of the Mural Society’s new artwork on the Library exterior.

Selah Springs—continued from Page 2



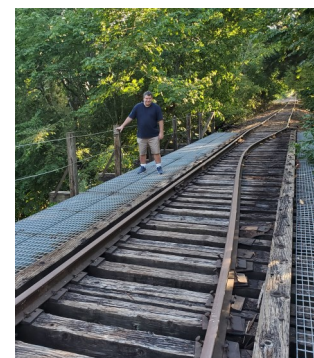
On September 1, 1913, Oregon Democratic Governor Oswald West rode the train to the site and likely delivered a Labor Day speech. During July of 1915, the Sons and Daughters of Oregon Pioneers brought the largest group to date to Selah Springs including three brass bands. The gathering featured a baseball game between Stayton and North Howell on a diamond constructed between the bottling plant and the railroad tracks. At 11:30 a.m. on August 13, 1920, Silver-



ton's Trinity Lutheran Church held services on the grounds led by Pastor Hendrickson. At 3:30 p.m. ice cream and hot coffee was served.

By the 1940s, construction of an irrigation dam cut off a great amount of the water supply to the cistern. Karl Dettwyler, Bernie's father, purchased the property in about 1945. Late longtime Silverton Road resident, Perl Bye, long owned a grindstone used at Selah Springs. Bernie said bottles unearthed at the old plant site were mostly the victims of target practice.

Except for the mossy cistern, little evidence of what happened at Selah Springs still exists. The railroad tracks have not been utilized in some years. Rails on the approximately 100-yard trestle east of the Springs warped severely during the record heat spell around June 28, 2021, reaching 117 degrees.



No evidence of why the site was named Selah Springs can be found. Private Selah Springs resorts exist in Virginia and Texas. In the Pacific Northwest, Selah is the Native American word for calm-or-still waters. Thus the name Selah, Washington in the Yakima Valley. Early missionaries liked the word because it is mentioned 17 times in Psalms. Mount Sela, not Selah, is a rocky location near Jordan in the Holy Land. Mount Sela, meaning "rock" is mentioned in Second Kings, Chapter 14, Verse 7 of the Old Testament.

Maybe we are talking Rock Springs?



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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!!

Candace Pressnall
Stephen Dudley

Ed and Julie Bowles
Rodger and Annette Greenfield

From this.....to this.....!



Come visit us to learn about the amazing transformation of our newspaper storage!
Thank you Larry Thomas, as usual!



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