

# Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Fifty Years of History in the Making!



Museum and Office  
428 South Water Street

## The Silverton Blow Pipe Company Part 2: Expansion and Innovation (Continued from September 2023 Newsletter)

There was a limited amount of foundry capacity available in Silverton in 1920 and, as a result, much of this type of work was farmed out to foundries outside of town. To keep up with the demand for Sibloco furnaces, a 60 x 118 feet lot was purchased directly behind the West Main Street building with plans to build the Silverton Blow Pipe’s own foundry on the site. The March 12, 1920 *Silverton Appeal* reported via a somewhat awkward sentence: **“With the intention of ultimately competing for this outgoing business and making of necessary castings for the “Sibloco” furnace that the foundry is being established.”**

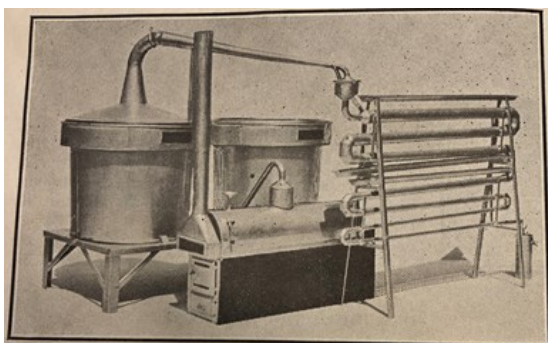
Firmly ensconced back in their own building on West Main Street, the Silverton Blow Pipe Company was growing at a rapid rate. For a few years, the company had revisited their idea of maintaining several distinct lines of business. They had decided to ditch their automotive and garage service a couple years earlier when they moved to Oak Street. To further specialize in their core business, the plumbing department was sold in April 1920 to Salem plumber Lee Inman, who operated the business in the blowpipe building before erecting his own building in 1925.



Silverton Blow Pipe Company’s W. Main St. Campus

As orders for the Sibloco furnace continued to pour in during the early 1920s, it became apparent that more storage space was needed to house the units before they were shipped out. Because of this, and especially in light of an order for 150 furnaces from a Portland firm, the company once again bought adjacent property where they built a warehouse in 1922, thus completing their West Main Street campus.

By the 1920s, the Silverton Blow Pipe Company was known all over the western United States as an industrial manufacturing juggernaut. Several innovative products were developed during this heady time. These lines included playground equipment that was installed at the new Eugene Field School in 1922, as well as other schools.



Eastman Brothers Peppermint Still

Mint became a major crop in the northwest in the early twentieth century when a major disease curtailed production in the eastern United States. Peppermint was in big demand, newly utilized to flavor many consumer products including chewing gum and toothpaste. To capitalize on the burgeoning demand for mint oil, research was carried out in the area of peppermint cultivation and production. The result was the development of a unique, relatively portable, mint still in 1918 to extract the mint oil from the plant.

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Curator's Corner

We are closed for the winter with plans to reopen in March of 2024, all cleaned up, with spiffed up displays and a plethora of plans for our 50th anniversary year! We look forward to seeing you then!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from our Curator and her volunteers!



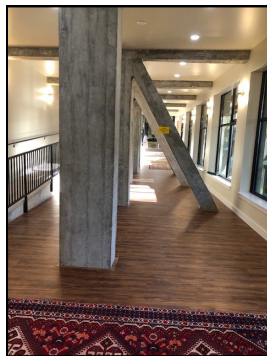
Judy Lowery



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New Old Spaces

We love it when our old buildings are given new life. Recently Emerald Events remodeled a space in the lower floor of the Hartman Building and will offer the area for receptions, parties, reunions....a lovely setting with a view of the creek.



Contact information—  
Ph: 503-989-9658

on Instagram at emeraldevents\_silverton  
email at EmeraldEventsSilverton@gmail.com

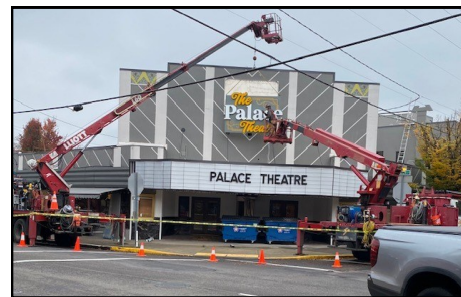


The enterprise joins Akatsuki Sushi Bar, Opaline Salon, SoundStream Music, Shayla Lynn Jewellery and Gifts, KG Studio Salon, Silver Creek Natural Health, and the Silverton Coffee Station in bringing life to the building.



And speaking of old spaces—

Recently uncovered during construction of the new City Hall—a portion of railroad tracks that led from Fischer Mill to the train depot. The City plans to save a section to have on display on the grounds of the facility. The tracks that remain will have to be paved over, as were the other sections that have been uncovered in the past.



Another “uncovering” of sorts— recent restoration of the Palace Theatre included revealing a new art deco style name plate. We are so excited to see the return of this Silverton landmark!

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## The Silverton Blow Pipe Company

### Part 2 Expansion and Innovation

Possibly as a result of prohibition in effect at the time, mint stills were later required to have a permit from the Federal Government that mandated a registration number be attached to each unit. This product became another of the company's big sellers. In later years it would be estimated the company's peppermint stills were currently installed in 80-90% of all mint fields in the Northwest. The Silverton Blow Pipe Company's (and later Eastman Brothers) expertise in the area of peppermint distillation was of such stature that they published the results of their research in a pamphlet titled "*Peppermint Culture and Distillation.*"

This material was used as a teaching resource at several agricultural colleges including schools at Pullman, Washington and Corvallis, Oregon. A scale model of the still, used by sales staff to promote the product, is on display in our museum in an exhibit devoted to the Silverton Blow Pipe Company.

According to a 2,200-word company profile published in the October 20, 1921 *Oregon Statesman*, other products manufactured during this time included metal building materials, spark arresters for donkey engines and locomotives, indestructible oil cans for logging camps and mills, storage tanks for towers or underground use, heavy power wash wheels, and hop and prune dryers.



We take the abundance of electricity for granted today, but in the early 1920s electricity wasn't always readily available in rural areas. As it turns out, the Silverton Blow Pipe Company enhanced electrical availability, as noted in the May 7, 1920 *Silverton Appeal*: "**S.H. Lima & Son transferred to their Butte Creek farm on Saturday two large water wheels which were built by the Silverton Blow Pipe Company. These wheels are to furnish power for their feed mill, seed cleaner, cider press and electric lights.**" The article noted the wheels were the largest of their type in the state of Oregon.

One of the company's more unique products debuted in early 1925. A fire evacuation device, known as the Eastman E-Z Start Fire Chute, was a circular metal tube attached to the outside of

multi-storied buildings, extending to the ground, that allowed quick egress from a burning building. Ninety children per minute could be evacuated by employing Eastman's patented "starting seat." The system was manufactured in several variations including open incline, enclosed incline, and spiral form. The unit was installed on the two multi-storied school buildings in Silverton.

Older Silvertonians may remember the fire chute installed on the south side of the old Washington Irving School. The March 17, 1925 *Oregon Statesman* indicated the chute had another use as well, relating "**..... the manner of escape is so simple and interesting that the faculty has difficulty in keeping the younger students from using them for pleasure.**" The fire chute system won the endorsement of the Pacific Coast Fire Chiefs Association at their annual convention in 1926. It was installed in over 450 schools, hospitals and other public buildings throughout the western United States, including those installed at Utah Agricultural College in Logan, Utah and at the Veterans Hospital in Walla Walla, Washington. Of particular note was the 60-foot-tall chute that was mounted in 1929 on the outside of a four-story school building in St. Regis, Montana. This was the tallest fire chute ever fabricated by Eastman Brothers up to that point.

Next up: Part 3 "A New Name, A New Building"

Remember—the Museum is closed until March 2024. Of course we are still available to help with research, answer questions and accept donations. Special tours can also be arranged as possible. Contact us 503-873-7070, via our Facebook page, or email us at [silverton.museum@live.com](mailto:silverton.museum@live.com)

### Veteran's Day Exhibit



This year we once again honored our Silverton residents who have served in our nation's military with an exhibit from our collection of service uniforms,. We hope that you enjoy this opportunity to share our thanks.



### Recent visitors to the Museum



Robert Lyons and Matthew Daniels—Grandchildren of Nelda Jean Price who was Polly Crandall Coon Prices's great granddaughter. We learned some things from them and shared photos and information we had as well. Polly is often affectionately called the "Mother of Silverton."



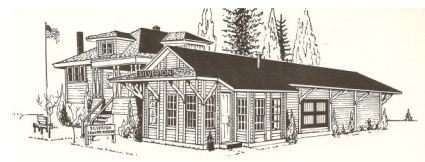
The oldest of ten children, Polly Lavinia Crandall was born in 1825 in New York.

After a move to Wisconsin, Polly became a teacher and married Thomas Coon. Polly, her daughter and Thomas moved to Oregon but Thomas died before the birth of their second child, a son.

Thomas Coon had a donation land claim on Silver Creek, comprising land where much of Silverton is now located. Upon the death of her husband, Polly had the claim surveyed into lots and sold them off to form the center of the new town. It is said, that in filling out the plat, she was asked for a name for the plat and she gave the name Silverton for Silver Creek which flowed through the area. Polly later married Stephen Price and had another son. Polly Crandall Coon Price died on October 22, 1898 just a month short of turning 73. She is buried in Hood River.

### Annual Meeting Planning

SCHS Annual Meeting is coming up —January 20th at the Senior Center at 1 pm. Mark your calendars! More information in the January Newsletter. ***What is really exciting is that 2024 is the 50th anniversary of the Historical Society.*** We will keep you posted on special activities and celebration details!!



## Christmas Gift Ideas



We have several items that can help you check off your gift giving list. Even though we are closed to the public, we are still available to help you find what you need! Give us a call at 503-873-7070 or email us at [silverton.museum@live.com](mailto:silverton.museum@live.com)

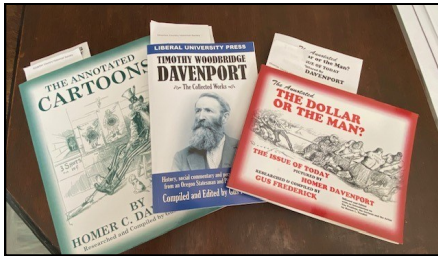
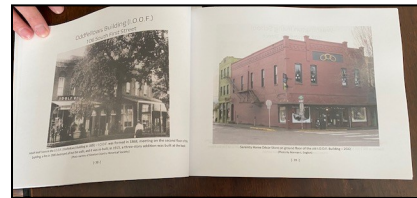
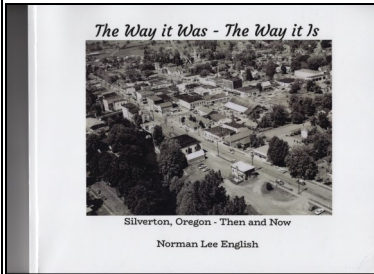
**A special treat:** Silverton Mural images made as keepsake jigsaws created by SCHS member Larry Thomas! They are beautifully packaged in an engraved wooden box. For more information and additional gift ideas, go to—  
<https://www.silvertonlaser.com/>



### And Books, Books, Books



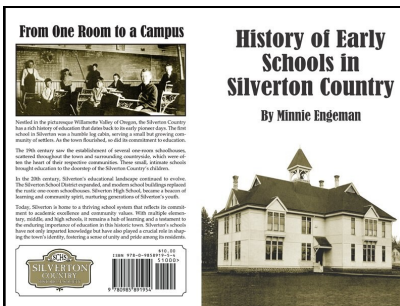
Norm English has a new book—*The Way it Was—The Way it Is* (\$28)—in a quick reference format, showing nearly 80 locations in Silverton ...many with historic photos dating to the very early 1900's, in a side-by-side format to accommodate a “then and now” visual comparison, with descriptive captions for each location. A real “must have” for lovers of Silverton history.



We only have one copy each of his previous books, *Remembering in Plain English!*, auto-biography of small town living (\$29.95), and *They Made it Happen, Silverton, Oregon's Noteworthy Characters of its First 100 years, 1985-1954* (\$18.95), but you can contact Norm to see about availability : [normengl@msn.com](mailto:normengl@msn.com)

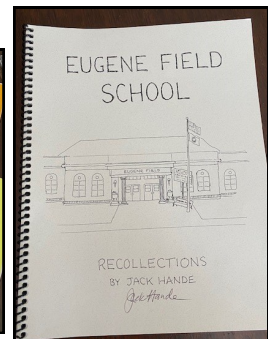
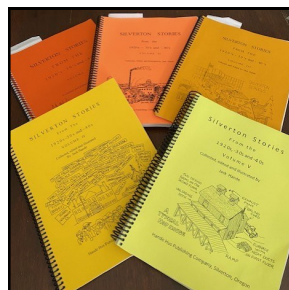
We also have copies of Gus Frederick's books, *The Annotated Cartoons of Homer Davenport* (\$20) and *Timothy Woodbridge Davenport, The Collected Works* (\$25) and *The Dollar or the Man?*

(\$20), a recent reprinting of Homer's 1900 book. Also, Images of America, *Silverton* (\$21.99)



New to the Museum, is the reprinting of Minnie Engeman's book, *History of Early Schools in Silverton Country*, (\$10) available soon. We also have copies of her *History of Silverton Public Schools* (\$14).

Of course we have copies of Jack Hande's *Silverton Stories From the 1920's, '30's and '40's*, an excellent series of recollections shared by Silvertonians who lived in the times—Five volumes ranging in price from \$12-\$22. A real collector's item too, is Jack's memories of *Eugene Field School*, (\$5).



Also on hand are books by respected educator, Millie Thayer, *Silverton Sampler II* by Larry Kassell, and limited offerings on *Pratum, Scotts Mills* and *Wilhoit Springs*. And of course, Homer's *The Country Boy* (\$12).





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*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!!***

Jack Hande      Ron and Jane Jones      Larry and Carol Zetterberg  
Maggie McBride      John Slocum      Diana Dicus      Chris Caldwell

***Reminder—Dues notices will go out after the first of the year!***

***Thank you for your support!***



*We wish you all the best of the  
holiday season!*

**Your S.C.H.S. Board**

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