



Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

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Rainier Mineral Soap Factory

By Mike Clark



The Rainier Mineral Soap Factory was formed in 1904, and it was operated by the Preston Manufacturing Company. The principal material used in the manufacture of the Rainier mineral soap was mined in Eastern Oregon and it was shipped to the factory at Rainier. The plant had a productive capacity of two hundred thousand cakes of soap a month. It was operated by steam power and it provided employment to twenty persons. It was reported that the antiseptic and healing qualities of this soap were widely recognized, and it had the strong endorsement of many of the leading physicians of this country.

The plant had three floors, the top floor had the vats where the mixing was done. The soap was cooked and put into forms for shaping on the second floor, then it was brought down to the first floor where it was removed from the forms after it was cool enough to be set. The slabs that came out of the forms were cut to the size of the soap bars, stamped and round-cornered; then placed in a hot dry kiln, where it remained for about five days in the process of drying before it was packed in paper cartons for shipment.



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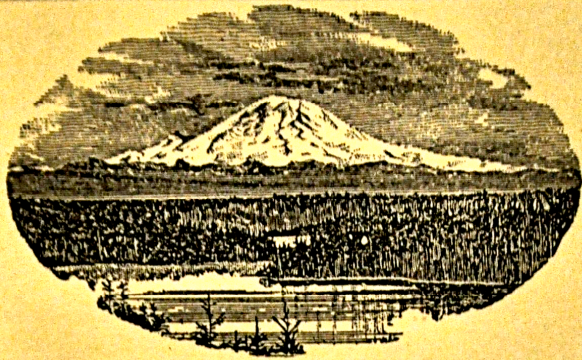


Come visit our booth at the Rainier Days in the Park July 7-10th 2016

Rainier Mineral Soap Factory continued:

Rainier Mineral Soap

A Natural Medicine for the Skin



MT. RAINIER.

**Keeps Out Blood Poisoning. No Fats—Antiseptic
For Toilet and Bath, Best in the World**

June 14, 1903, was Sunday. The village of Heppner with its 1200 people lay nestled in the foothills of the Blue Mountains of Oregon. At five o'clock in the afternoon the water from a cloudburst came sweeping down the gulches, tearing away the buildings and without warning blotted out nearly three hundred lives.

A pall of gloom hung over the place and the anguish of the survivors cannot be portrayed. To describe the awful horror is impossible. Some still sleep buried in the mud banks of Willow Creek.

The heat in the days following was intense. To extricate the bodies of animals and fowls was impossible. It was evident that drastic measures be taken in order to prevent a pestilence. The State Board of Health of Oregon was represented and fortunately enough the mineral from which this soap is made lay in the hills near by. Quickly orders were given to spread it over the ruins, it being known to be a disinfectant. The work was well done and the remaining inhabitants were spared another horror.

This soap is Nature's own preparation and a perfect medicine for the skin. It will make the skin soft and velvety, curing all defections.

For skin diseases, eczema, chapped hands, etc., it has no equal.

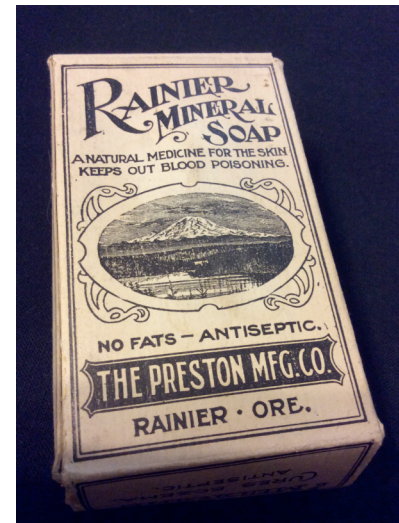
For toilet and bath it is perfect, and there is no discoloration or stain it will not remove. Ink spots, grease and stains can be quickly removed from the finest fabrics without damage.

For cleaning woodwork and polishing metals it is the best, and it does not scratch.

It is antiseptic and will prevent blood-poisoning. It will not irritate and the more constantly it is used the softer and nicer the skin becomes.

The merit is in the mineral. No drugs or chemicals are used, and it is clean, containing no dirty fats.

THE PRESTON MANUFACTURING COMPANY,
Rainier, Oregon.



Wrapped around each soap bar was tissue paper. On the tissue was printed the story about the origin of the main ingredient of the soap that had disinfectant properties.

Following a sudden cloudburst in Heppner, Oregon, on June 14, 1903, a flash flood swept through the town drowning 247 people, roughly one out of every six Heppner residents. The State Board of Health of Oregon had a serious problem on their hands, the threat of disease from decomposing bodies and farm animals. Their solution was to spread a disinfectant clay from a nearby hill over the entire area. This was later credited as preventing an epidemic. This same clay was used in the soap that Preston Manufacturing Company made in Rainier along with claims of not only curing what ails you, but it was great for removing spots and stains.

The factory stopped making soap in about 1928. It remained closed until an attempt was made in 1942 to bring the factory back to life. Nicolai N.

Blumensaadt, who managed the factory from 1905 until 1916, returned to oversee the filling of new orders. But it was short lived. All indications were that it closed again shortly after for good.

(Source: Rainier Review 1942-Feb-12, 1942-April-2, 1942-April-16, 1955-Oct-27, History of Oregon Illustrated Vol. 3, 1922, History of the Columbia River Valley From The Dalles to the Sea, Vol. III, 1928)

Museum News

Our First Year

The Museum's 1st anniversary will be on July 12. On that date a year ago, Kay Heflin, Martha Van Natta, Mike Clark and Rick Burnham met. We decided to establish a museum and dedicate ourselves to preserving our community's long, rich history and the memory of those who came before us. Judy Doving and Carl Pellham joined us on August 14 when officers were elected. We met again on September 11th when the bylaws were approved. We then opened a bank account and rented a post office box. Kay Heflin then began the enormous task of applying for non-profit status that included sending in our Articles of Incorporation to Oregon State which was filled on Sept. 23, 2015. That established us as a non-profit. And lastly, she filed form 501 (c)(3) for our tax exempt status, which was approved on Feb. 17, 2016.



Taking Inventory, Display Cases and Making Plans

We started the task of gathering materials of historical significance that had collected over the years in the Rainier library and in other areas of the City Hall. We boxed it and found secure places for storage. We will soon start an inventory. Last February we placed a display case in the City Hall on the first floor hallway. Kay Heflin provided several early Rainier images that were placed there. We also placed items relating to Rainier's postal history in the post office display case that they allowed us to use with appreciation. The city is remodeling a room in the City Hall and has offered us space for displays. And, we have also started making inquiries into the possibility of having our own place for a museum someday.

ROHM Booth at the Rainier Days in the Park



We will have a booth at the Rainier Days in the Park from July 7 through to July 10. We will have displays and offer information on our museum. We will be selling Christmas cards



that are reproductions of Christmas postcards printed in 1916

depicting 4 early scenes of Rainier, souvenir bars of soap similar to the soap manufactured by the Rainier Mineral Soap Factory in the early 20th century, and jam made from 2016 Rainier grown strawberries. Stop by for a look. Members are welcome to volunteer at the booth, please call Judy Doving at 503-369-1971 or e-mail Kay Heflin at kay-lynn2@hotmail.com.

Getting to Know You and Your Museum, August 6

We're having a "Getting to Know You and Your Museum" meeting at the Rainier Senior Center this August 6th from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. We plan to have displays, talks about our upcoming goals and have light refreshments. Members will have an opportunity to sign up to volunteer on upcoming projects.

More News

On May 31 Kay Heflin and Rick Burnham met with Mr. Demko's History Club and his first period class at Rainier High School and shared the history of the Rainier Soap Factory and early pictures of Rainier. We made plans to continue sharing history projects with his history students.

We invite everyone who shares our interest in preserving Rainier's past by becoming a member. We would also like to thank those who have already become a member and those who have donated funds.

Current Roster of ROHM

Abell, Sue	Heflin, Kay	Ransom, Eileen McKee
Baker, Carl	Herren, G. B.	Rea, Darlene
Blahm, Janice	Jamieson, Bernice L.	Russell, Nola
Burnham, Rick	Keith, Fred	Spurgeon, Beverly Lewis
Clark, Mike	McCollam, Willard & Kathryn	Stewart, Jock
Cole, Jerry	McKee, Doug	Strong, Frank
Cornerstone Café, LLC	McKee, Gordon	Sutherland, Loretta
Creamer, Linda	McKee, Helen K.	Thomas, Robert M.
Crosby, Louis	McKee, Ross	Van Natta, Robert & Martha
Dale-Moore, Alison	Nelson, Sloan & Jennifer	Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association
Doving, Judy	Nys, Paul and Judy	Wellington, Susie
Everman, Carol	Patching, Sam	West, Robert
Giepel, Karl D.	Pellham, Carl	Zimmer, Leona
Guasch, Joyce	Rainier Liquor Store	

To become a member, please pick up a membership application at the Rainier Senior Center or at our displays at the Rainier City Hall or the Post Office. Our membership information can also be found at this webpage address: http://www.geocities.ws/clarkmikew/ROHM_Application.PDF Our website is at http://www.geocities.ws/clarkmikew/Rainier_Oregon_Historical_Museum.htm



We are grateful to these people for their donations to the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum:

Robert Thomas for donating two early postcards of West Rainier and the Longview Bridge.

Chip Hamilton for donating an original box of Rainier Oregon Mineral Soap from early 1900, a wooden advertising token from Alston Country Store and a merchant token from Rialto, two nail aprons from Beck's Lumber Yard, keychains advertising Rainier businesses, a collection of Rainier police badges and a cold war police badge.

Susan Coldwell for donating a Rainier Pharmacy video token and Delena Grade School bulletins created by students dated from 1943, an advertising flyer from McKay's Pharmacy and early 1900 photos and negatives and an old Roy Rogers coloring book.

Ellie (Forrest) Biars for donating a 1916 Rainier High School football picture.

The City of Rainier for donating the historical collection stored at the Rainier City Library.

The family of Eleanor Abraham for permission to use and share the contents of Eleanor's publications and scrapbooks.

The St. Helens Columbia County Museum for donating Eleanor Abraham's books, & \$100 towards paying for our \$400 tax exempt application, which we were able to acquire.

The Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association for donating two late 1800s ledgers from Dean Blanchard's mill and store & some early copies of Rainier Review newspapers & donating \$100 towards paying for our \$400 tax exempt application which we were able to acquire.

Members who donated \$50 or more:

Carl Baker
Cornerstone Café
Rainier Liquor Store
Eileen McKee Ransom
Robert and Martha Van Natta
Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association

Members who donated up to \$50:

Loretta Sutherland
Joyce Guasch
Karl Geipel
Paul and Judy Nys

Thank you all so much for making it possible for our museum to grow.