



Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

Established. 2015

Number 3

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Rainier's Dibblee House

By Mike Clark

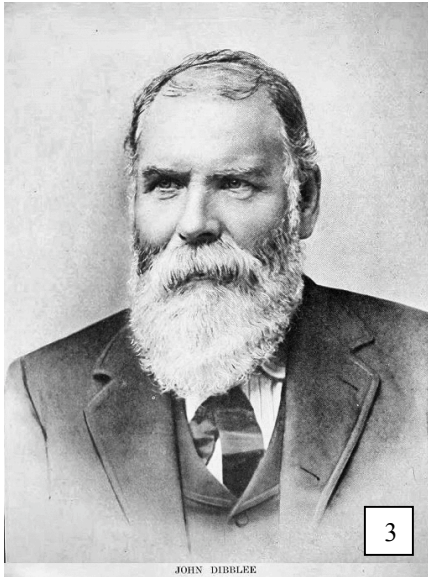


Over 160 years ago, between when Charles E. Fox founded the town of Rainier in 1851 and when he later platted the town site in 1855, Jess Fowler built his house. This house, with all of its alterations, stands today on the northwest corner of East B Street (Hwy 30) and East 4th St., and it is known by many as the Dibblee House.



John Dibblee and his family: wife Sarah, daughter Edith Elizabeth, and infant son Merrill, arrived in Rainier February 1869 after traveling from San Francisco aboard the side-wheeler "Ajax" on its way to Portland. It was a rough voyage for Sarah who was seasick while trying to take care of two small children. They came to Rainier because Dean Blanchard, Sarah's brother, had convinced them of the opportunities that Rainier offered. Blanchard had arrived in 1863, and had a successful sawmill and was involved in other business ventures.

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Soon after their arrival John Dibblee bought the Fowler house, which was one of only a half a dozen homes in Rainier at the time. The house was considerably smaller than the one today - there were only two rooms downstairs and two above on what is now the west end. In the ensuing years they



completed a circular staircase, added a large dining room and an east wing, making 13 rooms in all. They also built a large two-story wood shed with a covered path leading to it and a barn located southwest of the house. The entrance to the house was on the north side; but when a street later cut through their raspberry patch and barnyard, they moved the front door to the south to face it.

Their home soon became known to steamboat travelers as the only place to stay in Rainier. Their front door was never locked and steamboat captains advised their passengers, upon docking late at night, to go up the boardwalk, enter the house, ascend the stairs and occupy whichever room had an open door. Mrs. Dibblee in the morning would count the number of closed doors to know how many to cook for.

In 1871 they added another son to the family, Harold Rupert Dibblee, and they prospered. John in time acquired approximately 1,100 acres in West Rainier that was used for stock grazing, and he farmed 60 acres near Hudson. They also owned several blocks in Rainier in an area known as the Blanchard addition where houses were erected for rent. John and Sarah also became involved in local activities. He was a chairman of the early school board, one of a group that sponsored the first creamery, an original owner of the local telephone company, and a member of the water board. Sarah was active in establishing the Congregational Church. Ministers took turns staying at their house.

But, there were also sad times. In 1873 their 5 year old son Merrill died and two years later Sarah's 20 year old brother, Merrill Blanchard, was stabbed in a local bar brawl while on a visit and died two days later. Both were buried in the backyard under an apple tree.

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John Dibblee passed away on July 12, 1910 at age 72. Sarah (affectionately known as Grandma Dibblee) remained at the house until she died on Dec. 26, 1928 at age 92. Following her death, Mrs. Lois Kent, daughter to their son Harold Rupert Dibblee, lived in the house where she was born. She made many renovations over the years. She sold the house in the mid 1960s and moved to Portland to be with her sister Alice Izelle Conlon.

The Clouse family took up residency next at the Dibblee house. Thomas and Oleta Clouse ran their antique shop the Twin Gables Antiques there. They sold the house in the early 1970s to King Foshaug who remodeled it into apartments with a space on the ground floor for a retail shop.

Photos:

1. Dibblee house, photo taken by Mike Clouse in about 1968.
2. Dibblee house with barn, a detail from a larger illustration of Rainier, Oregon that was in a 1889 issue of The West Shore, a literary magazine published in Portland, Oregon from 1875 to 1891.
3. and 4. John and Sarah Dibblee photos used by permission by blumokitty on Find a Grave.

Museum News



We had two successful events since our last newsletter. The first was our booth at this year's "Days in the Park" in July. It was a way to introduce ourselves, convey our message of collecting, preserving and sharing Rainier's rich history. We also sold soap, jam, photos and Christmas cards to help generate income for our budget. We were very pleased with the public's interest and support and grateful for the contributions given to us, both monetary and historical.

On August 6 we held our first "Getting to Know You and Your Museum" at the Rainier Senior Center. There were displays, refreshments and speakers. The museum board worked hard to make this a success, especially Kay Heflin, Judy Doving and Martha Van Natta. Many came with stories of their own to share. Again, we were grateful for several contributions made to us. We had a great turnout, and preparations are being made for next year.





(L to R: Martha, Tiffany, Rick & Kay)

On October 11 Kay Heflin, Martha Van Natta, Rick Burnham and Tiffany Trahan made a visit to the Maritime Museum in Astoria on a fact finding mission to learn how to store and preserve our collection.

We gained two new members to the board. Linda Creamer took over the reins as treasurer from Mike Clark while Mike focused more on research and his life change of employment to retirement. And Tiffany Trahan as an additional board director. Their help and dedication is greatly appreciated. Their bios as follows:

Linda Ann Creamer. I was born in Island Falls, Maine, January 30th 1953. I was one of six children, five girls and one boy, who has still not forgiven us girls for the things we did to him. We moved to California in the early sixties so my father could get work as a welder at Mare Island. I finished high school in Esparto, California. I married Terry Creamer when he graduated from college at Sacramento State with a degree in Engineering. I got my Cosmetology license in San Francisco. I did that for about ten years, and I then went into Dental Assisting, and finally to the medical field, I retired four years ago. Terry and I raised four children, three boys and one girl. We proudly have 13 grandchildren, the lights of our lives. Our youngest is getting married this summer to a wonderful girl in Southern California. We have lived here in Rainier for nearly thirty years, and we love the community. I have always been interested in community and fellowship.



Tiffany Trahan. My husband and I moved here in Oct 2015 from Portland. Having both grown up in small towns, Rainier sang true to our hearts. Over the past year, we've fallen in love with the area, and we have grown quite fond of the community. I want to help with preserving the area's history and the growth of ROHM. I believe that heritage should be passed onto the new generations. I am excited about this opportunity.

Kay Heflin has been busy applying for a \$4000 Columbia County Cultural Coalition grant. We will need \$2000 as a matching fund. We now have over a \$1000, but we still need an additional \$1000. For those who want to contribute towards the matching fund please fill out the donation form at the back of this newsletter and return it to us. Any amount will help. The grant will go towards the purchase of materials for cataloging and preserving our collection. And for a new computer, printer and flatbed scanner to enable us to copy and save old photos. Also on our wish list are locking display cases and storage cabinets that will allow us to display and store our historical collection. This grant would make it possible for us to open to the public.

Announcements:

The Holiday Bazaar, Rainier Senior Center

November 12, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM



We have purchased a table for the Rainier Senior Center holiday Bazaar on Saturday, November 12, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We will be selling items that were featured at our Days in the Park booth that

included Christmas cards that are reproductions of Christmas postcards printed in 1916, replicas of soap made a 100 years ago at the Rainier Soap Factory, and jam made from locally grown strawberries. All proceeds will go towards a fund needed to apply for a grant to enable us to open our museum at the Rainier City Hall.



The four images on our Christmas cards depicting Rainier Oregon scenes 100 years ago.

Membership

As of October we now have 77 members:

Abel, Brian	Guasch, Joyce	Rainier Liquor Store
Abel, Crystal	Hadlock, Dick & Lynn	Ransom, Eileen McKee
Abell, Sue	Heflin, Kay	Rea, Darlene
Baker, Carl	Herren, G. B.	Russell, Nola
Bennett, Jerry	Irwin, Marilee	Skeans, Charles
Bernard, Duane	Jamieson, Bernice L.	Spurgeon, Beverly Lewis
Blahm, Janice	Johnson, Ray & Toni	Stewart, Jock
Burnham, Rick	Keith, Fred	Strong, Frank
Clark, Mike	Keith, Henry E. & Mary E	Sutherland, Loretta
Cole, Jerry	McCollam, Willard	Thomas, Robert M.
Col. Co. Museum Assoc.	McCollam, Kathryn	Thompson, Aimee
Cornerstone Cafe	McKee, Doug	Tift, Sam & Marilyn
Creamer, Linda	McKee, Gordon	Trahan, Ron & Tiffany
Crosby, Louis	McKee, Helen K.	Van Natta, Robert
Dale-Moore, Alison	McKee, Ross	Van Natta, Martha
Davis, Michael & Susan	Moore, Patricia Wilburn	Vance, Rick
Doving, Judy	Neer, Betty E.	Vernonia Pioneer Mus.
Everman, Carol	Nelson, Sloan & Jennifer	Assoc.
Fisher, Dale	Nys, Paul & Judy	Wellington, Susie
Foshaug, Aaron	Parsons, Dave & Cecelia	West, Robert
Gerdes, Claire	Patching, Sam	Wilburn, John M.
Giepel, Karl D.	Pellham, Carl	Wolz, Jan Davis
Graham, Jeff	Quinton, Peter	Zimmer, Leona

We are grateful to these people for their donations to the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum during the 2016 year. You are making it possible for our museum to grow.

Thank You for donating \$500 or more: Mr. & Mrs. Harold Davis

Thank You for donating \$100 or more:

Dale Fisher	Darlene Rea
Charles Skeans	Robert West
Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association	
Columbia Co. St. Helens Museum	

Thank you for donating \$50 or more:

Carl Baker	Cornerstone Cafe
Rainier Liquor Store	Eileen McKee Ransom
Rick Vance	Robert & Martha Van Natta

Thank you for donating up to \$50:

Loretta Sutherland	Joyce Guasch
Karl Geipel	Paul and Judy Nys
Henry & Mary Keith	Sam Patching
Beverly Lewis Spurgeon	Robert Thomas



Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

Established. 2015

Dear members,

This letter is your notification that your membership renewal for 2017 is due December 31, 2016. Use this form to send in your renewal. Yearly memberships run from Jan.1st , thru Dec.31st.

“Please Help Us Open Our Museum to the Public”

ROHM is applying for a \$4000.00 Columbia Co. Cultural Coalition grant. This grant will provide funds for us to purchase computer equipment, cataloging and archival materials, storage cabinets and display cases. This grant will make it possible for us to open our museum to the public. We need your HELP! When you send in your membership renewal, any additional donation will help us provide the \$2000.00 matching funds for the \$4000.00 grant. We already have half of the matching funds. Any amount above your membership dues is tax deductible.

___ Renewal of membership \$15.00

DATE: _____

___ *Donation \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please enclose your check with this form and mail to: ROHM

P.O. Box 762

Rainier, Oregon, 97048

*Rainier Oregon Historical Museum is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt charitable organization. Our tax identification number is 47-5361161.

If you have any questions, please contact ROHM President, Kay Heflin, at 503-556-4089 (home), cell # 360-751-7039 or kay-lynn2@hotmail.com or vice Pres. Martha Van Natta at martha113@hotmail.com.

Thank You for your continued support

Kay Heflin, President