



Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

Established. 2015

Find us at “www.rainiermuseum.org”

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LITTLE BOY ON A LOG CHUTE AND A BIG INCLINE

By LEE JOHNSON

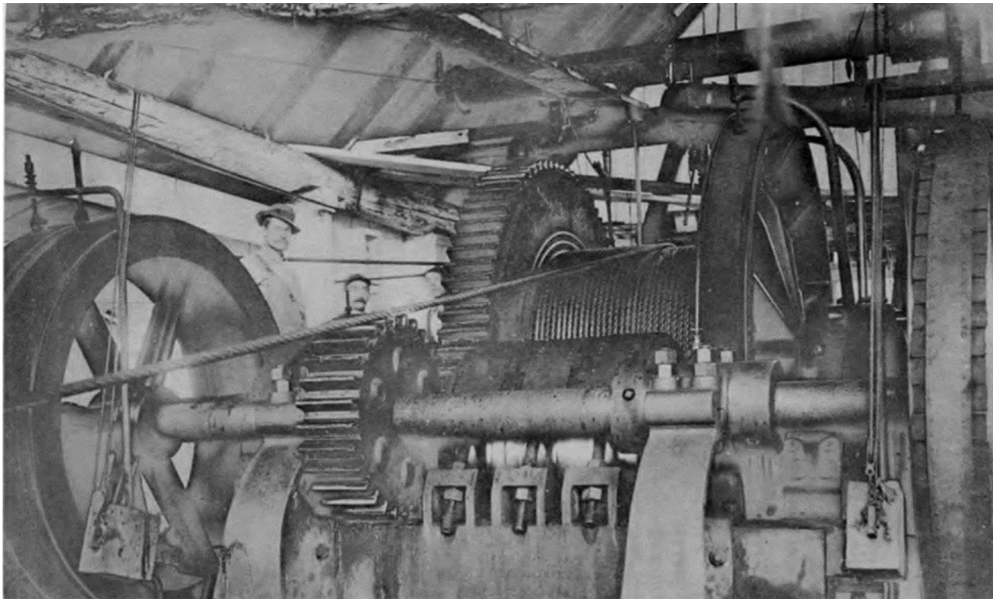
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Yeon and Pelton incline below Rainier, Oregon by John Fletcher Ford, 1910 (1)

I was raised on a 40-acre place four miles west of Rainier, Oregon, overlooking the Columbia river. In about 1901 Jack Peterson's log chute was about 30 yards from our house. Near there my father worked firing a donkey boiler. One of the first things I can remember was when my sister and I were playing in the yard. Suddenly my mother called me to get my father. As I looked up I could see the house was on fire. Although I was only 6 years old, I moved fast, but when I reached the donkey no one was there. I took off down the chute, 2,000 feet to the bottom where they were repairing it. When they heard me they looked up and saw black smoke boiling. By the time they reached the house it was about all gone. A neighbor, Agnes Burns, was there visiting my mother, but they weren't able to save much because my grandfather, who lived with us was asleep and they had a hard time to get him out. In 1902 John Yeon bought Jack Peterson's logging equipment and started building a railroad incline through our place. The track was about 200 feet from our new house. There were many things going on for a small boy to watch, such as bridge building, grading, track laying. The first engine installed to let the loaded cars down didn't have enough brake power. A larger one was built by Willamette Iron & Steel company, which was a two engine with 16x20 cylinders, with reversible gears and 10 manually operated brakes. This meant three heavier loads could be lowered down to the water. Cordwood was used to fire the two boilers. That incline is reported to be the first one built in the northwest (about 1902).

Andrew Peterson was the engineer; my father, Robert Johnson, was the fireman. Others who worked there during the time it operated were Uncle Joe David, Oscar Josephson, George Card, Ray Snider, Clarence Gore, Harry Frederickson, Blondy Frederickson, Hugh Platt, John Sharon. Later, in 1928, when I worked at Skamania, Washington, the same inclined engine was used on an incline at Murphy's 'Camp. One day one load of logs jumped the rail just as the loaded cars started down. I happened to be watching from our house. When they started to pull it back on the track the cable from the first and second cars broke, letting two cars run away. There were three different grades of about 25%, 30%, and 40%. One of the loads jumped off the track after it went by our house. The lead load kept on going and when the logs left the cars at the bottom of the hill they were in the slough bank several feet. I remember seeing the ends still sticking out several years later. When John Yeon built the incline through our place, the creek from our spring had to be moved so the overflow wouldn't run down the track. The new trench was close to our house, the ground was soft, and a heavy rainfall soon caused trouble. The day before Christmas, when my father was in Rainier, my mother noticed the kitchen door was hard to close, looking outside she saw cracks in the yard. When she looked at the yard back of the house she saw that the ground had dropped nearly a foot! Near the brow of the hill there were trees no more, because it was all bare; the hillside had slid off. When she saw that, she didn't lose any time getting us kids to the neighbors'. The logging company moved a donkey engine in and moved the house back nearly 400 feet where it stands today. Mother lives on the old place with my sister and her husband, Joe Schreiber. Mother was 94 this St. Patrick's Day, 1969. One memory of this place I often recall is when I was 10 or 11 I used to chop the small trees down just to see them fall, which is a far cry from the conservation practices of today. My brother-in-law has been selling the timber for sawlogs the last few years. In 1911 Portland Lumber Company bought out John Yeon's holdings. Instead of using the incline to get the logs to the water they built a railroad over the hill to Rinearson's slough about five miles from Rainier. When the railroad was finished, the incline machine and track were moved away. The concrete foundation for the engine is still there, but the sounds I used to hear are gone forever. The exhaust could be heard for miles around. Sometimes I think I can still hear that pulse generated from the back pressure in the cylinders as the loads were lowered down. I sometimes helped my father fire the boilers on that machine. Being young, I had to find the small sticks of cordwood that were more my size.



Railroad incline engine built by John Yeon and used in logging operations near Rainier in 1902. Men in photo are Andrew Peterson and Robert Johnson. As of 1969 the engine's concrete foundation was still there.

(1) Ford photo used by permission from the OSU Special Collections & Archives Research Center.

Museum News

By ROHM President Kay Heflin



Burnham, Martha Van Natta, Kay Heflin, Tiffany Trahan, Duane Bernard and Joanne Bernard.

Our museum has been very busy since our August newsletter. On September 9th we had a successful open house. People were very pleased with our displays and picture albums. We have added and filled three more display cases since our Rainier Daze exhibit and soft opening the first weekend of July.

Left to right: Carl Pellham, Rick

John and Sally Stennick attended our September board meeting, and they did a presentation about the all-class picnics. They have been putting on the all-class picnic for almost sixteen years, and it is time for them to pass the responsibility of this event on to a group that is committed to seeing that the event will continue. They asked if the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum would be willing to take over the operation of the all-class picnic. The board unanimously agreed to do this. It's important to carry on this local event that so many people in our community and former residents look forward to attending every year. It's a tradition that shouldn't be allowed to die, and our museum thought it was important for us to preserve it. The all-class picnic connects local and former residents to their past. We want to include Rainier history in some way at the picnic. We are looking for school pictures to add to our all-class albums. Keep your calendar open for the all-class picnic on the last Sunday of July at the Hudson-Parcher County Park.

Our Director, Rick Burnham, has given 10 Rainier Elementary classes a tour of our museum with emphasis on making the history of their town interesting so they will want to learn more. The tours included explanations about the contents in each display case in the lower hallway and in the museum. The students were asked to tell their parents about the tour and invite them to visit our museum. One of our main goals is to share our local history with our local students and impress on them how important their heritage and history is to them.



Our next project is creating a logging exhibit with the grant we received from the Paul Bunyan Foundation. This exhibit will show how the logging and the Columbia River influenced the growth of Rainier from the time our town was created in the mid 1800's till present time. The logging exhibit will include a memorial for local loggers. We are looking for pictures of local loggers, their trucks, old equipment, logging operations and stories.



and snapshots for our 2018 Veterans display and will continue to collect pictures throughout the year

On November 11th we had our first Veterans Day exhibit with 45 local veterans honored. Tiffany Trahan did an amazing job creating this exhibit. We have already accepted five more local veteran's photos



Vietnam Veteran Jim Owen



now Rainier Appliance store (on East A St., across from East 2nd St.). Paul Poetsch had a clothing store at that location for many years, his son was Carl Poetsch. Paul passed away in 1937.

Mike Clark, our Historian, is working with the city to preserve historic lettering on the street curb on "A" St. before it is demolished with the start of "A" Street upgrade this summer. On a curb is "POETSCH – SON 1922" located in front of the

Mike is also making inquiries about the Dibblee house that is now up for sale. It was built in the early 1850s before Oregon became a state, and it is one of the oldest existing structures in Oregon. It would be an asset to the community if it were a museum, a meeting place and the upstairs were rented as offices to help offset the monthly costs. There are grants available to help in the restoration, but it's finding the funds to purchase building that is a problem. He's asking anyone in the community who may have ideas on how to save this historic building.



Judy Lepin's term as our Secretary has ended. Now Judy has taken on the job of transcribing the original, handwritten ledgers for all the cemeteries in the Rainier Cemetery District. Once that is done, the information can be uploaded into programs that will allow internet access to it. It will also give the sexton much easier access to the information while performing his job, and preserve the old ledgers from further disrepair from the ongoing use.

Positions available

We desperately need a person to fill our vacant Secretary position. We also need additional Directors to help with the tasks involved with running our museum. At present we have only five people on our museum board to create exhibits and operate our museum, and we are spread pretty thin. If you would be interested in being a member of our board or be a volunteer or work at the museum on an occasional Saturday. Please contact Kay at kay-lynn2@hotmail.com or ph. 360-751-7039.

Membership

Your 2017 membership has expired as of December 31, 2017. Please use the attached membership form to renew your 2018 membership. If you are a new member who joined in the last two months, you are paid up thru 2018. Thank you for your continued support.

Donations

To share or donate your pictures email kay-lynn2@hotmail.com or rainiermuseum@hotmail.com, phone 360-751-7039 or drop them by our museum at the Rainier City Hall any Saturday from noon to 4:00 P.M. except during holiday weekends.

The Rainier Garden Club has donated \$500.00 to our museum which we will use to purchase archival supplies or a permanent museum sign for outside the City Hall. Our museum board is very grateful for this donation. Donations like the Garden Club donation help our museum to grow and become a museum that people will want to visit.

Letters

We had a museum visitor who stopped in at the museum on 11/4. She lived in Hillsboro, and happened to be driving through Rainier, on her way home from somewhere.

Her father had gone to grade school in Rainier, and she just took a chance that maybe the museum would have some information on the school.

I dug out the book of school classes that was put together last summer for the all school reunion display. In it were many grade school pictures that were my mother's. She had written the names of all the students in her classes on the back of each picture, which I had typed up so they could be displayed with each photo.

She found her father, standing next to my mother, in their 1934-35, Rainier 3rd grade, class picture! Roy Salmon, went to school with my mother until his family moved to St Helens, where he completed school. She was so thrilled to find photos of her father, and I was able to copy each one (there were 4) and give them to her.

It was the highlight of my 2 years with ROHM as I was able to share Rainier history with someone seeking it.

Judy Lepin



ROHM Board Members

Vice President, Duane Bernard

I was born 80 years ago on the Siletz Indian Reservation in Oregon and moved to the Apiary area with my folks in 1939. I started the first grade in the Apiary School, and now I reside right next to it. I married my high school sweetheart, Joanne Bentley, in 1957. We raised 4 kids. Our twin sons still live on Apiary Road, and the daughters are in Neer City and Longview.

I have authored two books, one on my hunting around the world and one on local history as I remember it. Hunting and hunting related issues have always been my first love with local history a close second. Although I am fairly new to the ROHM board, I have served on quite a few boards, including county, state-wide and international boards.

New Membership and Donations

We now have a membership of 99 as of December 10, 2017. New members who recently joined us:

Harold & Elaine Davis
Jan Everman
Joseph Govednik
Rosalie Herstrom
Sheridian D. Holland
Mary Scott
John Stennick
Sonja Uihlein & Kaiti Tesar
Marvin & Barbara Wilburn

We are grateful to the people and organizations that have donated to the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum between August 2017 and December 2017. Their gifts have made it possible for our museum to continue to grow.

Harold & Elaine Davis
Alan Norman
Harry Price
Sonja Uihlein
Rainier Garden Club



RAINIER OREGON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Established. 2015

www.rainiermuseum.org

Membership Application

We want to thank all our members for your continued support. Your membership for 2018 is now due. Please complete the following form and mail it to the museum or drop it off at the museum from noon to 4:00 on Saturdays, except holiday weekends.

Renewal membership: family ____ *individual* ____ \$15 ____

New membership: family ____ *individual* ____ \$20 ____

Gift membership \$20 ____

*Tax deductible donation** \$ ____

Total amount enclosed \$ ____

Print Name _____ *Phone:* _____

Address _____ *Email:* _____

City, State, Zip _____ *Date:* _____

Newsletters sent to you by: email ____ *or by mail* ____

Signature _____

Enclose your check with this form and mail to: ROHM
P.O. Box 762
Rainier OR 97048

**Contributions above the membership fee is a tax deductible charitable donation. ROHM is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Our tax ID # is 47-5361161.*

- Our yearly membership runs from January 1 through December 31.*

If you have any questions, you can contact the President of ROHM, Kay Heflin, at kay-lynn2@hotmail.com, cell# 360-751-7039 or Vice President Duane Bernard at jdmbernard@msn.com, Ph.# 503-556-9661.