



Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

Established. 2015

Find us at “www.rainiermuseum.org”

Number 1

2019

The Swede Houses 1906-1986

By Mike Clark



1

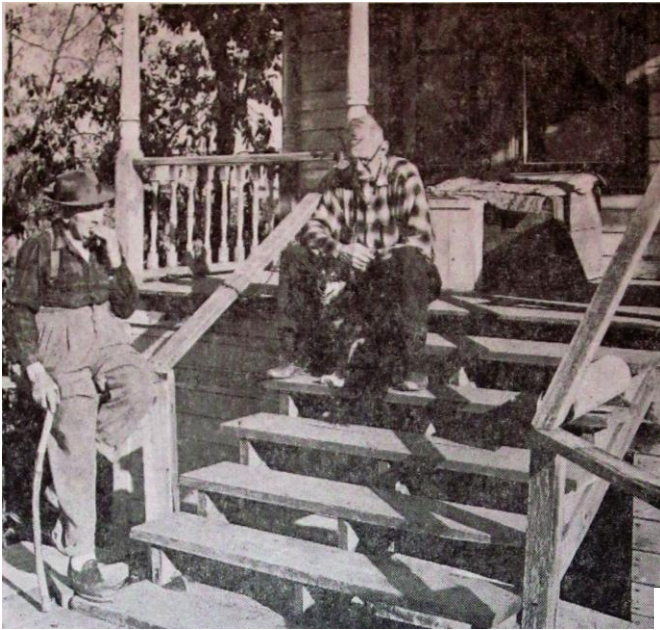
The Swede Houses, also known as the Twin Houses, were built in 1906. The photo above was taken in about 1926. The houses faced West. They were backed up to Fox Creek. The Rainier City Hall can be seen in the background at right. Carl Peterson is identified as the one wearing a tie standing on porch of house at left.

Jens Peter Olsen (shown at right) first migrated from his native Denmark in 1900 to Kansas, then to Rainier in 1903. His bride to be, Mary, followed. They were married in 1904. He was a cabinet maker and machinist by trade. He found work at the Plue Sash and Door Company. He also built houses, several of which still stand in Rainier to this day. Two of those houses he built, in 1906, stood side by side and were referred by many as the Swede Houses, or the Twin Houses. They were located along Fox Creek, just north of where the Ark Real Estate office is today at 315 West B St. They faced west with Fox Creek running behind. The houses were placed high off the ground because it was an area prone for flooding. The entrances were accessible only by an elevated walkway that ran north from the main roadway, now Highway 30.



2

Carl Peterson, a Swedish born native, moved into the house that was to the north in 1921. His aunt Tina Fredricksen lived in the house to the south. Carl was a logger and a fisherman. He was well known in the community. He lived in the house for more then 60 years. His aunt Tina passed away in 1968 and Carl in 1985.



3

Carl Peterson, at left, sits reminiscing with neighbor Charles Smith about the past and wondering about the future. There were plans to move the highway closer to the river putting Carl's house in its path, but it never happened. Below is a plank from a life raft off a Norwegian or Danish ship found by Carl in the Columbia River during WWII. Carl thought that the ship, from which the life raft came, may have been torpedoed. The legend "37 MAND" refers to the raft's capacity of 37 men. The plank was placed into the boardwalk that led from the highway to Carl's house and three others.



4



5

The Swede houses can be seen at left in this photo taken about 1915. At right was the Hammond Lumber Company railway that delivered logs down to the river. The railway was dismantled in 1918 after the completion of a planned five-year operation.



6



7

Floods were frequent in the low marshy mudflat where the Swede houses were built. In a 1964 photo (upper left) it shows the Swede houses and Charles Smith's house at right surrounded by water. The upper right photo shows the Swede houses towards the end of their usefulness. By the mid-1980s the houses sat empty and derelict.



8

As part of a citywide cleanup campaign, the Swede houses, owned by the Robert Lucas family, were slated to be demolished. Fire Chief Terry Grice and Patrick McVicker seized the opportunity for a training exercise for Rainier's volunteer firemen. On July 15, 1986, the two iconic structures were set ablaze ending their 80-year existence along Fox Creek (see photo on page 8).

References: Photos 1, 2 and 7 from the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum archives. 3, 4, and 8 from newspaper clippings also in the museum archives. Photo 5 contributed by Mike Clark. And 6 from the December 31, 1964, issue of the Rainier (Oregon) Review.

New Rainier Transit Station Opens

Show cases historical photos of Rainier



An opening ceremony for the new Rainier Transit Center was held on December 20, 2018. Located at 207 West B St., the center will be served by the Columbia County Rider (CC Rider) bus lines. The spot

where the new Center sits was once the Mobil Gas Station. In recent years CC Rider used the old gas station as one of its stops until it was demolished in April 2018 to make way for the new center. One of the highlights of this new facility is the historical photos of Rainier that will be on permanent display inside. This was made possible by Les Watters, Curator of the Columbia County Historical Society, who worked tirelessly with the picture selection, editing and cropping the pictures, making trips to Rainier to measure for the photos and meeting with our board member, Carl Nys, to work out a hanging system and to make the final picture selections. There are 15 pictures of early Rainier featured on one wall and a large 40"x 60" mural featured on the opposite wall showing the Bross family waiting at the Greyhound bus depot. It was located on A Street during the fifties, where the Cornerstone Café is located today. It turned out amazingly well, and we encourage everyone to stop by for a look.



(Upper left) The cutting of the ribbon by Mayor Jerry Cole and Commissioner Henry Heimuller on opening day December 20, 2018. (Upper right) Carl Nys and Kim Bross discuss a photo that shows Kim's family waiting for a bus in front of what is now the Cornerstone Café. (photos provided by Jerry Cole)



The interior of the Rainier Transit Center with permanent historical photo display. (photo by Mike Clark)



The grand opening of Walt Brawand and Tommy Keith's Mobil Station was held on April 13, 14 and 15, 1956, where the new transit center is located today. (photo by Kingsley Foshaug)



Recently the old gas station building, that had been altered over the years, was used by CC Rider until it was demolished in April, 2018, to make way for the new transit center. (photo by Mike Clark)

Museum News

By ROHM President Kay Heflin

2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

April 28 - Ferry Elsinore Exhibit

May 12 - Established a museum building fund

July 7-9 - Rainier Days in the Park booth

July 14 - Hosted the Columbia County Heritage Association meeting

July 29 - First year for hosting the All-Class picnic at Hudson Park

Logging exhibit - The Longview, Kelso and Rainier Model Railroad Club has created and donated a diorama of the logging incline to our museum. It is now on display at the museum. Our museum continues to look for local

logging pictures and items that we may use in our exhibit. Please bring any pictures or items into the museum on any Saturday from noon to 4:00 P.M., except major holidays. This spring we are having a special event and presentation of our logging exhibit.

Two hundred and forty-six grade school students and 12 supervisors visited our museum in October and November. Jerry Kelly of Longview put together several stations for small groups to move around the museum and experience history first hand. They could grind corn, demonstrate early tools and hammers, see early century footwear and dress, early examples of vacuum cleaners and much more.



November 10 - Veterans Exhibit. We still have Veteran CD's for sale for \$5.00 each. We are still looking for Rainier Veterans photos to add to our 2019 Veterans exhibit. The cutoff date to be included in the 2019 CD and video is August 15, 2019. Bring your Veteran's pictures into the Rainier Museum on Saturday from noon until 4:00 P.M. or send them to; kay-lynn2@hotmail.com.



December – Our museum worked together with the Columbia County Historical Society to create the historical display at the new Rainier Transit Center. See enclosed report and pictures.



Tunie Betschart is one of the directors on the ROHM board. Her father Ted McAtee attended Goble Grade School and graduated from Rainier Union High School. Following graduation, he went into the Navy followed by a job in Alaska, where he met and married her mom, Clara Konig. In 1947, when Tunie was born, her mom flew to Seattle and took a bus to Rainier where Ted's parents lived in order to give birth to Tunie in the Rainier area, since Alaska was not a state at that time. She and her four sisters attended Goble Grade School and graduated from RUHS. She has lived in the area most of her life with just a couple very short hiatus periods. She has two children who both graduated from Rainier High School. She married Doug Betschart in 1983. In 1984 they moved from West Rainier to Goble to a farm five miles from where Tunie grew up. She and Doug share five children, 13 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. Tunie says "I have enjoyed a variety of jobs in my life including, working as a waitress, managing a beauty shop, driving taxi, and working for a landscaping company all in Longview. I also loved working at the bank in Rainier and the Trojan Nuclear Plant. When Trojan shut down I went to work for the Tax Supervising

and Conservation Commission office as a budget analyst for Multnomah County in Portland, overseeing the municipal budgets in the county which seems to satisfy my love of numbers. I enjoy working and when retirement crosses my mind, I take a week's vacation and realize I'm just not ready! I would miss work too much to give it up. I like to keep busy and enjoy photography (especially of people), scrapbooking, sewing, canning, spending time with family and friends, and hearing about the history of the Goble-Apiary-Delena-Rainier area. I hope to assist the board and volunteers in making the Rainier Historical Museum a place of interest, information and enjoyment for local residents as well as visitors to the area."

Rainier Oregon Historical Museum Board

President: Kay Heflin
 Vice Pres: Duane Bernard
 Treasurer: Martha Van Natta
 Secretary: Sherry Evans

Directors: #1 Rick Burnham
 #2 Teresa Bentley
 #3 Leona Zimmer
 #4 Carl Nys
 #5 Tunie Betschart

Historian and Newsletter Editor: Mike Clark

We want to thank our former director, Carl Pellham, for his commitment and contribution to our museum these past four years. Carl had to resign for medical reasons this past month. He will be greatly missed. We wish him the very best.

We have three new board members; Secretary Sherry Evans, Director #2 Teresa Bentley and Director #5 Tunie Betschart. Thank you, to each of you, for becoming a part of our museum and contributing your time and knowledge.

Our Newest Members

As of January 15, 2019 we have 136 total members.

Carla L. Bodenhamer
 Alan Bozarth
 Bobby Jo Brusco-Harding
 Alice Gault
 Tom & Darlene Girt
 Tomey & Anne Greer
 Henry Heimuller
 Patricia Plunkett Holler

Larry Humphrey
 Ivan J. Jones
 Penny Karnoski
 Donna Massey
 Doug McKee
 Alan Norman
 Patricia Oberndorf
 Rainier Jr/Sr High History Club

Chris Smith
 Mike Tolleshaug
 Sharon Tracy
 Cathy Usher
 Patricia (Hadlock) Valpiani
 Darrel Whipple
 Marianne Yamashita

A Great Way to Help the Museum Grow

It is simple to give a wonderful gift to the Museum by including Rainier Oregon Historical Museum in your will. We have greatly appreciated the generous bequests received by the museum. These and other gifts help keep our museum operating and growing. Please consider willing part of your estate to the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum to keep our history alive for future generations.

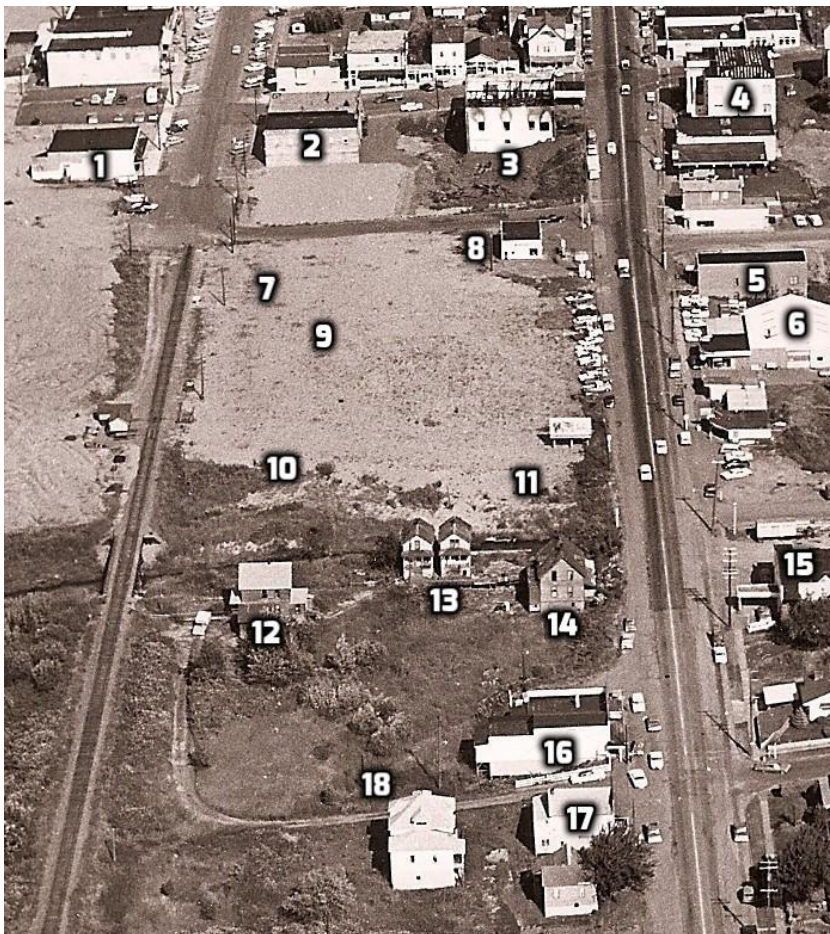
The museum has recently received donations from the following individuals.

William Barton
 Jim Bauserman
 Alfred S. Berg
 Duane Bernard (*)
 The Cornerstone
 Carole Elbert
 Dale Fisher
 Carole Girt
 Joyce Guasch
 William & Mary Harrison

Willard & Kathryn McCollam
 Gordon McKee
 Betty Neer
 Paul and Judy Nys
 Steve Oliva
 Sam Patching
 Earl Singleton
 Mike Tolleshaug
 Fred Van Natta
 Kay & Marilyn Van Natta

Robert & Martha Van Natta
 David Wellington
 Jan Davis Wolz

(*) Duane is donating 100% of proceeds from the sale of his book "Reflections of Early Times In and Around Rainier, Oregon" to the Museum.



Rainier, Oregon, June 1965 (from above looking east)

1. Peace Lutheran Church 1954-1969. Present location of the Rainier Eagles and El Tapatio restaurant. 2. The Rainier Variety and Wallin Furniture Store, now the Rainier True Value Hardware. 3. Lowes Motors, heavily damaged by a fire on June 8, 1965. Now the Columbia River Carpet One Floor & Home. 4. City Hall (built in 1920-21). 5. VFW hall, was in the process of being demolished when a freak twister finished the job on November 10, 1965. 6. Barker-Roberts Chevrolet, now the Rainier Truck and RV Center. 7. Present location of Dollar General, opened May 12, 2018. 8. Original location of Walt Brawand and Tommy Keith's Mobil Station that opened in April, 1956, recently used as a station for CC Rider. The building was demolished in April, 2018, and a new transit center was built in its place that opened on December 20, 2018. 9. Originally Nap's Market that opened May 27, 1966. Over the years it changed names. It was last occupied by J & R Sales that closed September 30, 2017. The building was demolished soon after. 10. Present location of Grocery Outlet, opened June 28, 2018. 11. Location of Hop Elliott's Chevron

Standard Station that opened on October 1, 1966. Hop retired in 1985, and the building was later removed. 12. Maggie Girt's house. 13. The Swede Houses, home to Carl Peterson and Tina Fredricksen, built in 1906 and burned in a fire drill on July 15, 1986. 14. Charles Smith's house, present location of the Ark Real Estate office. 15. Union Station and Garage, present location of the Chevron Food Mart. 16. Brusco Grocery, destroyed by a fire on June 8, 1972. The structure was built in 1923. 17. Secondhand store. 18. J. G. Kawall's home and Photo Studio.



RAINIER OREGON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Established. 2015

www.rainiermuseum.org

Membership Renewal Form

[If you have already paid your dues thru 2019 disregard this notice.]

Thank You to all our members who continue to support our museum. You make it possible for our museum to exist.

I would volunteer to work in the museum or at museum events, yes__ no__

Individual__ Family__ Membership Renewal \$15_____

New Membership \$20__ Gift Membership \$20_____

** Tax Deductible Donation:*

Building Fund Donation \$_____ or Regular Donation \$_____

Total amount enclosed \$_____

Print Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Date: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

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, Oregon 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 contact, President Kay Heflin, at kay-lynn2@hotmail.com, cell# 360-751-7039 or Vice President, Duane Bernard, at jdmbernard@msn.com, Ph.# 503-556-9661