



Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

Established. 2015

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Number 2

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Rainier, Oregon: A Day to Remember

By Harry E. Rice

From his book "Episodes in the Life of a Columbia River Kid" printed in 1969

Introduction: Harry Rice, born in 1893, was the youngest son of three boys of pioneering couple, Sherd and Annie Rice, who came to Rainier in 1882. They first homesteaded on Beaver Creek. In 1898 they bought a large tract of land in West Rainier. Harry attended Rainier schools and played football. He was in the first high school graduating class of 1912. The 1920 yearbook showed the alumni as being a chemist living in Chicago. He later moved to St. Paul, Minnesota. He lived there for many years with his wife Josephine. He passed away in St. Paul in 1972. Though he spent most of his life far from his hometown, he still held his experiences of growing up in Rainier near and dear. He recorded these experiences in a book "Episodes in the Life of a Columbia River Kid" published in 1969. Below is one chapter “Rainier, Oregon: A Day to Remember” taken from his book showing a slightly wilder side of Rainier back in the day.

A little lumbering and fishing town on the south bank of the Columbia River, right at the big bend in the heart of the Coast Range, about 50 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Population about 2,500, mostly engaged in salmon fishing or the lumbering industry. Some farms scattered around where they could find a level space, five sawmills and three logging camps. The main street, Water Street of course, was wide and ran parallel with the river. The SP&S railroad ran down the middle with its inevitable siding alongside. There were the usual assortment of stores, dry goods, grocery, meatmarket, drugstore, barber shops (two), blacksmith, bank and post office, and only seven saloons. These were strung out for about four blocks, the ones on the north side projecting out over the river supported by piling and back of that, warehouses and wharves. The ones on the other side were dug into the foot of the hill which went up for a few blocks and possibly about 500 feet high. I must not forget the Rainier Hotel, a three-story frame building backed into the hill with the lobby and small stores on the first floor and about 30 rooms above. Such was the town.

The prominent men decided that we were to have a rousing old fashioned Fourth of July celebration that year - it was about 1904 or 1905. They put out collection boxes all around in the stores and offices and asked everyone to contribute and have a part in the affair. One of the committee told my Dad that the best collections came in from the boxes placed in saloons. This general collection was supplemented by donations from business and prominent men of the town. Quite a sizable war chest was accumulated.

Preparations were begun weeks in advance. We had our public square - a platform a couple of hundred feet square on the river side of the street and extending out over the river. The planking was heavy enough to accommodate the heaviest drays and teams. The men got busy and put up a framework over the whole area. Then they hauled in fir branches from the logging camps and made a roof over the whole works. It furnished shade, and with the river breeze blowing freely it was nice and cool. Then they brought in fir trees 12 or 15 feet tall and lined them up along the edge of the sidewalks from one end of the business district to the other. When the branches were trimmed off the inside a little over head-high it formed a delightfully shaded arcade the full length of town. In addition a pit was dug and logs burned to form a huge bed of live coals. Then a beef and a couple of hogs were spitted over them to barbecue. A man was kept on duty to turn the spit.

Finally the Great Day arrived. I lived on a farm adjoining the town on the downriver side. I was up long before daybreak as I had my chores to do and was certainly not going to miss the start of things. I had some trouble with the milking. The cows did not realize what day it was and put up a protest at being milked at that early hour. At last I was done and went to the house to gulp a hasty breakfast, wash behind my ears and don a clean shirt and jeans.

It was just sunrise and there was the darnedest explosion. (I think this was on the Fourth - it seems to have been around that time.) We knew the blacksmith was going to shoot his anvils on the Big Day. (This consisted of placing a handful of black powder between two anvils and touching it off with a redhot iron rod.) Another man was going to set off some dynamite. But nothing like this! We all rushed outside to see what was happening, and the whole episode fell into focus. U. S. Navy ships often entered the Columbia and visited Portland during June and July celebrations - battleships, cruisers and torpedo boats. (The *Wisconsin* was in around this time; the *Wyoming* in 1904; *Marblehead*, *Chicago* and *Boston* in 1905; others in 1906 and 1907; in 1912 it was the *Oregon*.) On this occasion, because of the tricky currents and vagaries of the channel, the Navy captain had decided to anchor overnight. The ship was right out in the river in front of my home and had fired a sunrise salute. The reverberations caught between the mountains on both shores sounded like the granddaddy of all thunderclaps. You can rest assured that everyone in town was wide awake.

I know for sure it was the morning of the Fourth when I saddled my pony and set off for town, for I was to ride in the parade. Dusty was feeling his oats, so he proceeded to give a very good demonstration of how a cow bronco ought to buck. I managed to stay with him and we were on our way.

I had a whole silver dollar in my pocket so I was a millionaire. You would be surprised at the firecrackers you could get for a dollar back in those days. I picketed Dusty in a vacant lot with plenty of grass and went to join my friends. We wandered up and down the street until eight o'clock when we had to report for the parade. Then we got the thrill of our lives! The captain of the Navy ship had sent its band, a contingent of Blue Jackets and a group of his officers in full dress to join our parade.

The Governor of the state was to be the speaker of the day. His special car which was attached to the morning passenger train was due at 9:30. So we marched to the station and lined up right where the car would be spotted. The liveryman, Joe Lowe, all dolled up in his Sunday best was there with his new "surrey with the fringe on top" to provide transportation for the Honored Guest. I think that Governor Chamberlain (I think that was who it was) when he stepped out on the platform in his formal frock coat and top hat, must have just about collapsed when he saw the military line up standing at "Present Arms." With the band to lead us we made a circuit of the town and ended up at the square. The band and the military returned to their ship and with a three-whistle salute answered by the mills and every whistle in town, the Navy was on its way to Portland.

Our program proceeded in its planned form, Opening Prayer, Welcome by the Mayor, Dean Blanchard, Reading of the Declaration and the oration by the Governor. Then everyone cleared out to allow the men to rearrange the benches and set up long plank tables. The call rang out, "Come and get it before we dump it in the river." And everybody came. Such a feed! Barbecue sandwiches, cheese, baked potatoes with lots of home-made butter, pickles, smoked smelt, home-made ice cream - with real cream, coffee or milk. Seconds were available.

In the afternoon there were games and races, climbing the greased pole, and of course the tussle for the greased pig. There was a baseball game with a team from St. Helens.

Then it was time for everyone to go home and take care of the evening chores. We had some friends, including several of mine, and Mother set us up a good picnic supper. We all collected in the front yard, right on the bank of the river, to watch the fireworks. They had been purchased with the contributed fund and were to be set off from the deck of a lumber barge anchored in midstream. We sure had ringside seats, but I believe they could have been seen from every house in town, built on a hillside as it was.

As the sun sneaked down behind the western mountains, the snowcapped peaks of Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams took on a posy pink of the afterglow to furnish a beautiful backdrop for the fireworks - supplemented by the reflections in the mirror-like river. And so a tired boy hit the hay to dream ... I should say not. He was too dead to the world to dream.

I think that everyone who could walk, hobble or crawl had attended the celebration. Dad said that it was estimated that over 3,000 had been fed at lunch.

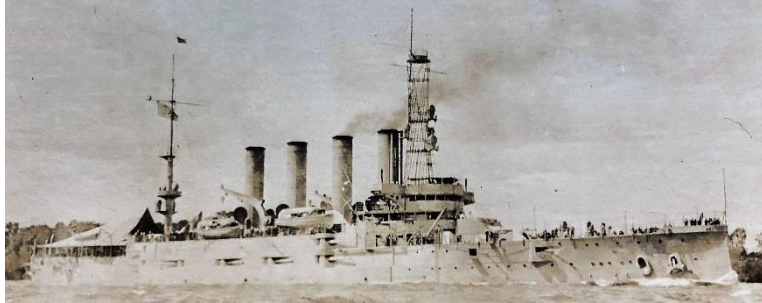
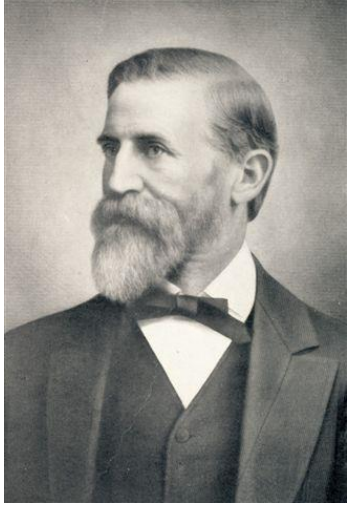
Just an aftermath. A few days later the men collected all the trees and fir branches and piled them on a float made of drifting saw logs. This was towed out to midstream and set on fire. So with this mighty bonfire slowly drifting downstream behind Walker's Island with the outgoing tide came the last part of a Day to Remember.



Rainier, Oregon High School Glee and Football Club, from a photo taken in November 1911 and made into a postcard. Harry Rice is shown standing third from the right. This image was provided by Paul C. Lewis who identified those in the photo from a list of names on the reverse. Also mentioned on the reverse was the school colors; green and white (still the standard after a hundred years).



At the left is a photo of Oregon Governor George Chamberlain who served from 1903 until 1909. At right is Dean Blanchard who served as the chairman of the board of Rainier city trustees from March 1905 until February 1907. The title of Chairman changed to Mayor in March 1908. Below is a photo of a naval warship taken from Rainier as it headed up the Columbia River for Portland. A migration of these ships took place each summer well before Portland's first Rose Festival in 1907.



President's Report

by Kay Heflin

As always, our museum board members are busy making plans and preparing for coming events. We have a busy schedule for this summer and into the fall. Save these dates on your calendar:

Saturday, June 22: The Rainier Oregon Historical Museum will be hosting a special "Meet and Greet" event for Grand Marshal, Margie Clark, between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. ROHM has taken over the duties of picking and promoting the Grand Marshal for the Rainier Days in the Park celebration. Come join us at the museum and meet Margie. The museum is located in the Rainier City Hall on the 3rd floor.

Friday July 12 thru Sunday July 14: The Rainier museum will have a booth at the Rainier Days in the Park. Festival hours start Friday, July 12, at 3:00 p.m. and continue through Sunday, July 14, till 6:00 p.m. Our Vice President, Duane Bernard, will be driving Grand Marshal, Margie Clark, in his Model A Ford in the parade. Following the parade on Saturday, you can meet Margie, at our booth between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. We will be selling tickets for a raffle basket, historical books and other historical items. Come and check out our picture albums filled with historical Rainier pictures. Our museum will open one hour earlier on Saturday, July 13, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., we will display pictures from past Rainier Daze celebrations from 1959 thru 1973.

Sunday, July 28: The Rainier All-Class Alumni Picnic will be Sunday, July 28, at Hudson-Parcher Park. Admission to the park and parking will be paid by the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum. A potluck will begin at noon. The Rainier Oregon Historical Museum will provide eating utensils, plates, water and coffee. It is advised that you bring extra seating. Follow parking signs to the right, inside the park entrance. Camping sites have been added in some of the area that was used for parking in the past. Follow the "All-Class Picnic Parking" signs to a new parking area. The Rainier museum will have a table of class pictures set up at the park site. Please bring any school class pictures or pictures of Rainier, that you would like to share or to add to our museum collection.

Saturday, September 7: Logging Exhibit at the museum, with special events from 11:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with presentations on Goble, Prescott and the Clark and Wilson Mill, The Yeon-Pelton Incline and the Simon Benson cigar rafts. We will also have a "What is This" logging items show and tell presentation. We welcome any logging items you would like to share with the museum on Sept. 7 for the show and tell presentation. The movie "God's Country and the Woman" will be shown in the City Hall Chambers Room starting 11:00 a.m. and re-showing at 2:00 P.M. The movie has scenes filmed in Prescott, Spirit Lake, on the Toutle River, and near Cathlamet, Washington, The Logging exhibit will be upstairs in the museum.

Thursday, September 19: ROHM Annual meeting and election of officers starting at 1:00 p.m. at the Rainier Museum. My four-year term as President of ROHM will expire in September. Please think about becoming a board member and an officer of your local museum and plan to attend our annual meeting.

Updated missing yearbooks list: 1923, 1927, 1930, 1934, 1943, 1954, 1955, 1988, 1994, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2018, & 2019. If you have any of these years, we would love to have them in our collection at the museum. We are also accepting duplicate copies to have in a bookcase for visitors to look at and enjoy.

This month I have scanned photos from Marvin Wilburn's Prescott photo Collection and Military and family photos from Bob Whitbeck's Collection. Marvin Wilburn's Prescott pictures will be used in the Prescott history presentation that will be part of our Logging exhibit on September 7. The veteran pictures that I scanned from the Bob Whitbeck collection included Bob and his two brothers. These pictures will be added to this year's Veteran's exhibit on Saturday, November 9. It is very important if you have a family member who you would like to add to this year's veteran exhibit, you should bring in their pictures as soon as you can. The deadline for submitting veteran pictures is August 15. We need time to scan the pictures, put them in frames and include them in our Veteran CD. We still have last year's veteran CDs on sale for \$5.00 at the museum. You can bring your photos into the museum any Saturday from noon to 4:00 p.m. or email them to me at; kay-lynn2@hotmail.com

Donations: There have been some special items donated to our museum since our last newsletter was published. Al Davis brought in a large scrapbook from the Dolly Pfaff estate. The scrapbook is so big there are whole newspaper pages attached to the pages. There are some very interesting pictures in the scrapbook that will make a great contribution to our museum's picture collection, and the newspaper articles are a great collection of Rainier history. The newest item donated was a token given out the first week after the toll was lifted from the Longview bridge. This token was given to us by the Vernonia Museum. This item will be added to our Longview Bridge display on the second floor of the City Hall near the clerk's office.

The next time you are cleaning out or organizing, or at an estate sale, keep the museum in mind. We welcome any Rainier items, no matter how small. Have any old pictures of events or negatives of Rainier? We would love to have them.

The mission of the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum is to preserve Rainier's History. The board members of ROHM are doing this one item at a time. Please come to the upcoming events that I have listed and support your museum.

Our museum is open every Saturday from noon to 4:00 p.m., except holiday weekends. **The museum will be closed May 25 for Memorial weekend.** I want to express my gratitude all of our members and the donations that are being made to support our museum. Thank you, Kay Heflin, President of ROHM.

2019 Rainier Days in The Park Grand Marshal *Marjorie Clark*



Marjorie Clark, known to her friends as "Margie", came into this world in September on Friday the 13th, a month before the great stock market crash of 1929. Though luck seemed not to be in her favor, she did remarkably well. She was born in an area known as Kentucky Flats in Rainier at the house her father, James Lepin, had built that still stands on West B St.



Margie is a descendant of early Rainier Pioneers who began migrating from Carter County, Kentucky, in the 1880s. Her grandfather, Samuel Cecil Counts, who had heard of the opportunities to be

found in Rainier from relatives and friends living there, arrived in 1902, and he found work as an accountant at the Rainier Sash and Door Factory. He returned to Kentucky a year later and brought his wife, Florence, and their four children to Rainier. They later had three more children including Marjorie's mother, Elaine.

On January 2, 1946, at the age of 16, Marjorie married Nelson Clark. She had met him the previous year at a dance while he was a Seabee with the U.S. Navy stationed at Clatskanie. Her mother thought Margie had gone shopping, but a friend let it slip that she had gone to a dance. Her mom was furious to learn that her 15-year-old daughter was out commingling with service men. When Margie returned home, she found that her mom had locked the front door. She had to climb in through a window to get back inside.

Nelson and Margie moved to Dothan, Alabama, for a one-year commitment Nelson had made to his father to help him farm. After returning to Rainier Nelson found work at Longview Fibre Company. One of the houses they rented was in West Rainier, but it was damaged beyond repair in the 1948 flood. The first house they bought was on West E St. across from Marjorie's brother, Nelson Lepin. In 1953 they built a house on Wonderly Road in the Delena area.

Marjorie was a stay-at-home mom while their children, Mike and Patricia, attended the Delena Grade School. In 1965, they moved closer to Rainier; and the children attended Rainier schools. This was about the same time Margie found employment at Weiby's clothing store with Mel and Elsie Riveness. Later on, she worked at Coldwell's Pharmacy with Glen and Frances Coldwell. She also worked at the Bon Marche in Longview, later volunteering at the St. Johns Hospital helping to discharge patients and working in the gift shop.

Margie and Nelson enjoyed traveling. Following Nelson's retirement in 1984, they traveled around the United States in a motorhome. They also went on cruises and visited Europe. They enjoyed square dancing in Rainier with the Rainier Columbia Squares and later with the Square and Circle in Longview. Nelson passed away in 2004. Marjorie moved from their home on Riverview Drive into a townhouse near the Rainier Senior Center where she volunteers.

In 2010 she represented the senior center as a princess of the "My Fair Lady" pageant at the Columbia County Fair. She was crowned queen. She still travels. She recently returned from a cruise through the Panama Canal. She spends quality time with her many friends and family.

Margie wishes to thank the Rainier Days in the Park committee and the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum for the honor of being picked as this year's Grand Marshal.

ROHM honors Carl Pellham with Honorary Lifetime Membership

The museum board members surprised Carl Pellham at the Rainier Senior Center with an Honorary Lifetime Membership to the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum. The museum board wanted to show our appreciation for



Carl's dedication and service to our museum. He has been a board member of our museum since it was established in 2015. Carl had to resign as a board member this winter for health reasons, but he continues to come in every Saturday and catalog our donated items for the museum. Thank You Carl!

Left to right; Sherry Evans, Carl Nys, Jerry Kelly (museum volunteer), Duane Bernard, Carl Pellham, Rick Burnham, Kay Heflin, Teresa Bentley and Leona Zimmer.

OUR NEWEST MEMBERS through May 11, 2019. We now have 131 total members.

Margaret Barton-Ross
Buzz & Alice Beck
Kim Cardwell

Judy Faulkner
Kathy Gregory
Anneatta Hamlik

Alan and Susie Hulsopple
Heather Kramberg & family
Ron & Linda Zimmerman



RAINIER OREGON HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Established. 2015

www.rainiermuseum.org

Membership Application or renewal

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 major holiday weekends.

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

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

Lifetime membership (over 18 years of age) \$500 _____

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.

This museum membership form is always added to our newsletters. Disregard this form if you have paid for your 2019 membership or pass the form on to a friend or family member, or better yet use the membership form to buy a gift membership for a special friend or family member.