



"Preserving the past for the future"

www.rainiermuseum.org

Number 3

Fall 2021

Life in Beaver Valley in the 1860's

By Robert P. Van Natta

Rainier, as a convenient place to tie up boats without need of much wharf, conveniently located near the halfway point between Astoria and Portland, has a history as old as Oregon. It was the only place between Goble and Mayger where you could have an inland accessible wharf, but the access was steep and difficult.



As the site of historic town of Rainier is limited by steep hills, many people have long assumed that the gently rolling hills just “over the hill” to the west/northwest of Rainier (called, “Beaver Valley”) would ultimately become a population center for the area. Many of the oldest maps of the area show massive subdivisions in the Delena area, for example, but few have been built.

There were, of course, places for docks on the “other” side of the river (Longview); but Oregon achieved statehood in 1859, giving it a bit more certain political future, and swamps and flood plains were a mission impossible for a man with a shovel. Evolving mechanization changed things. While drag lines made reclamation easier, the absence of rail service was a negative for the Beaver Valley. Massive westward

migrations of the 1840's and 1850's had filled the Willamette Valley. What was showing up in the lower Columbia River was essentially overflow from the land rush of the previous decades.

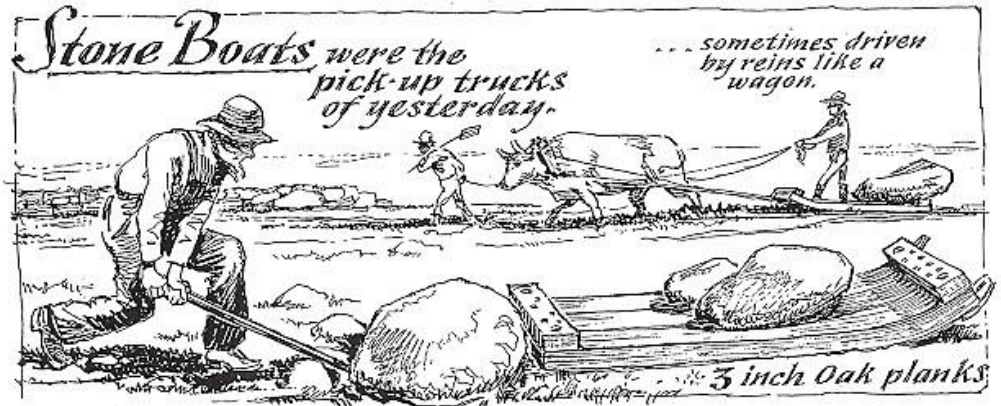
The historians haven't identified many people who settled in rural Rainier earlier than Sam King Hudson (1818-1906). He came west in 1860 and first settled in Washington Territory along the Cowlitz River. He hadn't been there very long when a flood came along. He escaped with his life, but he lost his buildings and livestock. After this experience he was looking for something that wouldn't flood. This led him to some ground where there was an open spot and some fruit trees, presumed to be from an earlier, failed homestead where the Hudson Cemetery is now located, across the road from the more historic Woodbine and Green Mountain Cemeteries. The precise year of Hudson's highwater experience isn't documented, but it is notable that the highest flood waters recorded since people of European ancestry settled in Oregon occurred in the winter of 1861-62.

Although Rainier's location was excellent for river boats and the best location for inland access in the area, inland access was still a challenge. There were two creeks in side canyons at Rainier, Fox Creek and Nice Creek. Both could be called “box canyons,” implying the creeks were fairly short and provided no gentle slope to higher elevations. Access along the banks of the Columbia River nearby was impaired by swamps and cliffs well beyond the abilities of the early settlers to overcome. For most of the 19th century, hand tools (shovels, picks, axes) were the principal road-building tools available to early settlers. Also, among the common horse-drawn

appliances was a “stone boat” (a small flat sled just a few inches thick usually of wood) on which you could load heavy objects, or for that matter a pile of dirt, and use a horse to drag it to another location. A feature of the stone boat was that the traces (the connectors between the harness and the sled) were connected low on the front of the sled so the sled would pop up and over obstacles that the draft animal might step over

If you read Wikipedia to learn more about how a “stone boat” can be used, you may learn that it was likely used by the Irish from the beginning of time to move the heavy rocks in their fields to the edge where they were dry stacked as fences. It works just as well for hauling rolls of barb wire out to build a fence where there is no road, or for retrieving some camp meat that might have met its end somewhere other than in the middle of a wagon road.

The Fresno (2) became available after 1883 and quickly became popular for road construction. The



The Homestead Act of 1862 contemplated that a homesteader should build a home on the property, live on it for five years, improve and “cultivate” it. Just how you could accomplish this on land choked with trees 150 feet high and up to six feet in diameter at the base isn’t totally clear. It was clear that you would need at least a horse trail, more likely a wagon road, to town to survive, as the most common cash crop for most of the rural folks were shake bolts and cordwood. Both could be produced the year around and reliably sold for cash in town or at the river boat landing.

The community formally took the name of Hudson when the Hudson Post office was established on June 20, 1892. Sam King Hudson’s daughter, Susan A Hudson (Everman) (1869-1949) was hired as the first postmistress. We have as Mr. Hudson’s legacy the much-treasured Hudson Park consisting of the lowlands along Beaver Creek to the south of where Mr. Hudson lived. Hudson Park was recently renamed “Hudson-Parcher Park” in recognition of the Parcher Family’s contribution to the community. But, alas, the Parcher story is for another day.

(1) The map shown above is of the central Beaver Creek area showing the area road patterns in the mid 1950's. This predates the Rainier-Alston revision of Highway 30. However, Townsend Hill Road did exist and was connected to the easterly part of Wonderly Road. This article is focused on a portion of the Valley in front of (South) of the Beaver Valley Grange. Beaver Creek, as a creek, is a tributary of the Clatskanie River joining with it near the Benson Log dump on the north edge of Clatskanie. The headwaters of Beaver Creek are found in the Beaver Springs area (south of Rainier beyond Fox Creek and Nice Creek) with major branches tracking the Fern Hill Road and Apiary Road most of the way to Apiary.

(2) In 1883, a small horse-drawn scraper called a “Fresno” was patented. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fresno_scraper

References: Columbia County History Volume V (1966), page 27



Robert P. Van Natta, a member of the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum, is a contributing writer to the ROHM newsletter. He is a graduate of the Apiary Grade School, the Rainier Union High School and the Willamette University Law School, a practicing attorney, writer and a logger. He served on the board of the West Oregon Electric Cooperative, Inc. for over thirty years. He is active in the Oregon Association of Loggers. He has a keen interest in the local history of Rainier and the surrounding areas. He is producing a series on Rainier’s early, rural settlers, with this being his first article.

President's Report

By ROHM President Kay Heflin



2021 All-Class Picnic: Our all-class picnic was held on Sunday, July 31. Approximately 150 people enjoyed the picnic and visiting with classmates. It was a beautiful day. Thanks to the efforts of our board and our Treasurer, Martha Van Natta (who passed out membership forms) we gained 17 new members. Grade school class photo albums were on display. Attendees helped with filling in names of classmates.

Museum Building Fund: Our museum building fund continues to grow. Following a fund raiser on July 31, sponsored by Senator Betsy Johnson and other donations, we are only \$25,000 away from our goal of \$100,000 and receiving \$100,000 in matching dollars from an anonymous donor. Once our goal is met, we can have blueprints drawn up for our new museum and continue with plans for starting our new museum. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to our museum building fund. We can't do this without you.

We have a plaque to acknowledge those who have donated a minimum of \$500 to our building fund. Donors' names will be engraved on a gold name plate and added to the plaque. We also have a plaque to

honor the memories of friends or family who have passed and whose family or friends have donated a minimum of \$500 in their name.

Yearly Logging and Veterans Day Events: Our museum board has decided to cancel the September logging event due to the rise in covid cases. We will decide at a later date if these events can be safely held due to Covid restrictions.

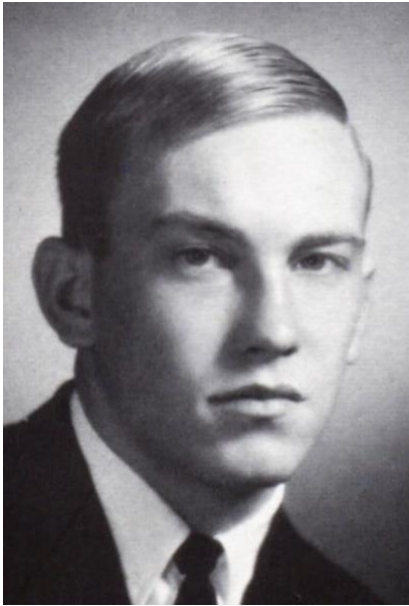
Mentor Program: We have applied for the Oregon Heritage Mentor program. An experienced mentor would evaluate our collection advising us on cataloging and preserving our collection.

Bookworms: Three members of our museum, Teresa Bentley, Sherry Evans and I participated in the Bookworms in the Park program at Rainier City Park from mid-June until mid-August. The program was held in conjunction with the Rainier Library and grant writer Brian Garrison, who was a Rainier graduate. Children up to 8 years could attend. The children had fun doing crafts, writing and drawing pictures. A story time was included. Mayor Jerry Cole read the story in the first week of the program. Names were drawn and most children went home with a new book. Watching the kids' faces light up when a story was read to them, or when they won a book to take home was priceless.



We have a great museum board who works hard to make our museum succeed. Thank you to Vice-President Duane Bernard, Treasurer Martha Van Natta, Secretary Sherry Evans, and Directors: Rick Burnham, Teresa Bentley, Delyla Laughlin, Alice Beck, Tunie Betschart and our Historian Mike Clark. I am grateful to all of you.

In Memory of Carl Pellham 1950-2021



Carl Pellham was a 1968 graduate of Rainier Union High School and lived most of his life in the Rainier area. He was an original board member of the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum and was very knowledgeable of Rainier high school sports. He presented to the museum several three-ring binders containing RUHS sports photos and history that he had collected. He spent much of his time at the museum cataloging items that had been donated to the museum. His handwritten entries were noted by many as being impeccable. Carl received an Honorary Membership Certificate for his service at ROHM on May 16, 2019. Use the link for the 2019 video “Rainier Football



History 1967 and 1968” featuring Carl Pellham, produced by Mayor Jerry Cole:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vLgG7KxdiQs&t=5s>

A Hearty Thank You to Senator Betsy Johnson

We wish to extend our thanks to Senator Betsy Johnson who sponsored the museum fundraiser that was held on Saturday, July 31. As a result of Betsy’s efforts and other donations since the fundraiser, we have been able to raise almost \$20,000. Also, the museum has been awarded a \$7,500 grant from the Columbia River PUD. These funds will be used toward building our new building on “A” Street. We can use each and every donation we receive as we still have a long way to go before building. If you would like to make a donation towards our new building, please send your check marked “building fund” to ROHM, PO Box 762, Rainier, OR 97048.



Annual Membership Meeting to be held October 14, 2021

A brief annual meeting will be held on Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. at the museum on the third floor of the Rainier City Hall across from the library. The purpose of the annual meeting is to elect a secretary for the board. The term of Sherry Evans, our present secretary, expires this year. She has indicated a willingness to be elected. Nominations will also be taken from the floor; however, any nominee must indicate a willingness to serve as secretary to be a valid nominee.

Supporters of Rainier Oregon Historical Museum Building Fund as of September 2, 2021

The Rainier Oregon Historical Museum is very grateful to our members and supporters listed below. We have now raised \$75,500 for our museum building fund. Once we reach \$100,000, an anonymous donor will match \$100,000. If you would like to donate to our new museum building fund, please send a check to: Rainier Oregon Historical Museum (ROHM), PO Box 762, Rainier, OR 97048.

Andersen, Beverly
Baker, Carl
Barton, Bill
Beck, Steve (Memorial)
Bernard, Duane & Joanne
Betschart, Tunie
Blahm, Janice
Blahm, Penny, Estate of
Blayney, Jim & Patty
Bonnell, Marcia J.
Brusco-Harding, Bobbie Jo
Burnham, Rick & Ann
Byrnes, Karol
Clark, Marjorie
Clark, Mike
Clatskanie PUD
Cole, Jerry, Mayor
Columbia River PUD
Cramer, Jack & Nancy
Elbert, Carole
Evans, George & Sherry
Everman, Carol
Everman, Jim & Amy
Fisher, Dale
Golford, Nancy L.
Gault, Alice
Giepel, Karl, Sara & Kody
Greer, Anne
Gressett, Norman & Beverly
Guasch, Joyce
Gutierrez, Marcie
Hamlik, Anneatta
Harding, Rod & Karin
Harrison, William & Mary
Head, Meryl
Heflin, Dick & Kay
Heflin, Kenny & Venita
Heimuller, Henry
Hoard, Robert
Holmberg, Karen
Jamieson, Bernice
Jenkins, Claire

Jennings, Steve
Johnson, Betsy, Senator
Johnson, Bob & Linda
Johnson, Ray & Toni
Keith, Henry & Mary
Kelly, Jerry & Huong
Kessell, Sandi
Kramberg, Heather
Kreger Construction
Krenik, Connie & Jim
Gaston
Laughlin, Delyla
Lawrence, Sue
Lincoln, Sandy
May, Daniel & Radona
McDonald, Christine
Miracle Ear (Longview)
Moon, Russ & Jan
Moore, Patricia
Northcutt, Sara
Nys, Paul & Judy
Oliva Brothers, LLC
Owens, Jill
Petersen, Al
Poat, Tess & Alx Gilmer
Rainier Eagles #4022
Rainier Liquor Store
Rainier Masons
Ransom, Eileen McKee
Rauch, Robert L. Sr.
Rea, Erma
Reid, Doug & Judy
Richey, Wendy
Ridderbusch, Edd & Judi
Rosebraugh, Charles "Ed"
Russell, Nola
Samuel S. Johnson Foundation
Schmidt, Jason
Singleton, Earl
Skeans, Charles
Stennick, Bill

Teevin Bros. Land &
Timber
Thomas, Roger & Lisa
Tipton, Les & Dyan
Tolleshaug, Mike
Uihlein, Sonja
Van Natta, Kay
Van Natta, Marilyn
Van Natta, Robt & Martha
Vance, Ken & Karen
Vance, Rick
Vasey, Tim & Kim
Will, Larry
Wilson, Emily
Wolz, Jan

Several Anonymous Donors

AN EASY WAY TO GIVE TO THE MUSEUM BUILDING FUND

This is an easy way to donate to the museum's building fund for those of you who order products from Amazon. If you would go to [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), then you could sign up to have Smile.Amazon donate to the charity of your choice (assuming they are on the Amazon list). I hope that would be the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum. They pay out to charities quarterly. Last quarter we received just over \$5. As far as I know, I am the only one signed up. Smile.Amazon donates .5% of each eligible purchase to the charity of your choice.

Pledge Cards

This is to inform you, our members, that you can now donate to the museum building fund in the easiest possible way. We now offer pledge cards for your convenience. Merely request one from any board member or pick one up at the museum. Choose the amount you want to donate per month, sign and date the card, then send it to the museum or drop it off there. Anyone pledging \$500 or more will get their name on a plaque displayed in the museum. If you can come up with an easier way to help build this new museum, we'd like to talk to you. Thanks in advance.

Duane Bernard, ROHM Vice President

NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST QUARTER

(6/9/21-8/21/21)

We have 235 memberships* now.

Jan Acquistapace
Donna Bissel
Troy Burns
Alan & Lisa Caulfield
Frank Curtis
Bert Dilley
Andrea Dittmer
Colleen & Jon Erickson
Karla Fowler-Phipps
Norman & Beverly Gressett
Marcie Gutierrez
Monica Hackenberg
William & Kathleen Hayes
Robert Hoard
Senator Betsy Johnson
Lester Kahr
Sandi Kessell
Del & Linda Larson
Sue Miller
Rainier Mason Lodge #24
Ron Vance
William Ryan
Eric Sanders
Darlene Simshaw
Dianne & Dennis Skolrud

Bill Stennick
Les & Dyan Tipton
Louise White
Mark Whiteley
Darrell Witt
Cathy Wood
Robyn Yeoman

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Mike Avent
Greg Beck
Buzz and Alice Beck
Steve Beck (memorial)
Harold and Elaine Davis
Carol Girt
William and Mary Harrison
Mark and Sue Pitra
Rainier Mason Lodge #24
Charles Skeans
Teevin Bros. Land & Timber Co.

HONORARY MEMBERS

Columbia County Museum Association
Steve and Jan Oliva
Carl Pellham
Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association

* Memberships can be an individual member, a couple, or a family.

Contact information:

ROHM President Kay Heflin: kay-lynn2@hotmail.com or 360-751-7039

ROHM Vice President Duane Bernard: 503-556-9661

This issue was produced by ROHM President Kay Heflin, newsletter editor Mike Clark, and assistant editor and proofreader Martha Van Natta. Uncredited photos were contributed by interested parties.

Fun with Old Photographs

Mike Clark and his daughter, Kay, spent an afternoon walking around Rainier with old photographs from Mike's and the ROHM collection and looked for the exact spots from where the photos had been taken years before. New photos were then taken with the old resulting in an interesting then and now image. A book is planned showcasing their work.

The State Bank of Rainier opened in 1906 on "A" Street. A fire in 1924 severely damaged the second floor, and it was removed. The building had gone through several changes over the years and ownerships. In 1970, the State Bank of Rainier merged with the Oregon Bank. In 1988 it became Security Pacific Bank, and then the Bank of America in 1992. In 2013 the Bank of America closed its doors, and the building as of 2021 remains empty.



Henry and Clint Weiby opened "Weiby's" clothing store in 1946 after they acquired it from John Rupprath who had bought the dry goods business from Isadore B. Lindeman the month before. Lindeman started in a small building next to the State Bank of Rainier in 1913. Mel Riveness was hired to manage Weiby's in 1948, and his wife Elsie joined him in 1949 after their marriage. The store closed in the mid-1980s after they retired. The store at right was the Marshall-Wells/Rainier Hardware Co. owned by Fred J. Tucker. In 1947, after 35 years, Tucker sold his business to his nephews, Joe and Bernard Oliva.



A rare cyanotype print that shows Rainier's Main Street (now "A") looking East. This was taken in about 1906 before the State Bank of Rainier was built in the gap between two buildings at left. All the buildings shown at left and the three-story Grand Hotel at right were destroyed in two separate fires in 1924. The train station survived. The street was entirely planked with wooden boards (from the Mike Clark collection).

Rainier Oregon Historical Museum
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