



"Preserving the past for the future"
www.rainiermuseum.org

Over \$200,000 in our Museum Building Fund

WE'VE DONE IT! Our museum has raised \$100,234, and we have received a donor's matching funds of \$100,000. Yes, we have just over \$200,000 in our museum building fund! We couldn't have done this without the generosity and support from you, our members, and the Rainier community. We are very grateful to You! However, this is just a start. We need much, much more to complete the new museum. Please keep helping us.

We have chosen Lower Columbia Engineering, (Andrew Niemi) for our architectural and engineering work, and we will be submitting ideas for our museum to him this month. They also designed and built the new Rainier Transit Center. We still have a long way to go, and we will work tirelessly to raise additional funds to complete our museum. We now have a record number of 256 memberships. With your renewed memberships and donations, this will support our museum and its goal of raising additional building funds. The events that we have during the year, and the items we sell at our events and at the museum, raise money to support our museum.



The designer of the Rainier Transit Center, Lower Columbia Engineering, has also been picked to design the ROHM Museum building.

Hudson Chapel Preservation Update

Another project is the Hudson Chapel. We were able to get a grant last year to pay for an inspector who provided us with estimates to restore the Hudson Chapel. We are waiting on a report from an engineer to determine what it will take to fix a bulging wall on the west side of the chapel and possibly moving the chapel to the location of our A Street property when our museum is completed. Our museum board is still researching and learning what is the best course of action for the Hudson Chapel. If we get favorable news from the engineer, the museum board will decide if we will move forward with a preservation grant that is available in April of 2022.

Hike and Bike Trail to Little Jack Falls



Talks are continuing with the Columbia County Commissioners and the Parks Department about creating a hike and bike trail to Little Jack Falls. We will be applying for a Recreational Trails Program grant through the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department in the Spring of 2022. (Photos by Mike Clark)



Jason Schmidt Chosen as 2021 Volunteer of the Year

Jason Schmidt, on the left, received the 2021 ROHM Volunteer of the Year award from Duane Bernard last October 22 during a ROHM Building meeting. He spent three days of excavation work on the new museum building property. He took down trees, pulled out stumps and hauled them away. He then leveled the lot. By volunteering his labor and equipment, he saved the museum hundreds of dollars. Thank you, Jason! (Photo by Martha Van Natta).

Thank You!

We want to say a big THANK YOU to Alice Beck, who was our event chairman for the November Fall Bazaar at the Rainier Senior Center. Through her leadership and hard work to reach out to people to donate baked goods and handmade crafts, the event broke a record and raised \$500 for our museum. Thank you to all of you who donated baked goods and handmade crafts to make this event a success. We will continue to sell tickets for our raffle basket at our museum and during our summer events. We will announce the winner at the All-Class Alumni Picnic at Hudson/Parcher Park on Sunday, July 31, 2022.

Additional Help Needed

By Duane Bernard, ROHM Vice President

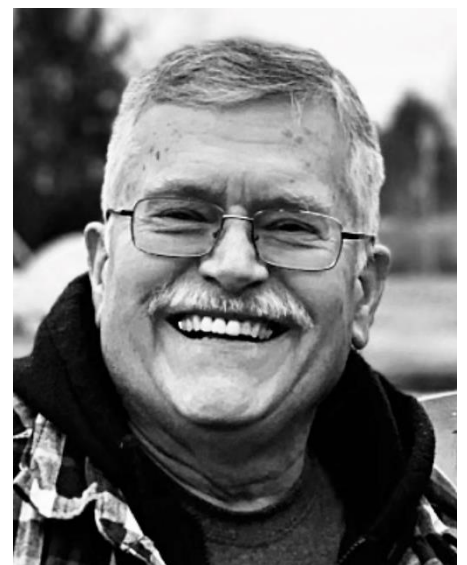
I believe our fundraising is going quite well, although not nearly enough to start building yet. We have chosen Lower Columbia Engineering of St. Helens for architectural and engineering guidance. We will be holding a meeting with them in the near future. Picking the architect and a contractor along with the FINAL plan are huge tasks for a small non-profit, such as ours. We offer pledge cards so people can pick an amount to be donated monthly. We have a large "Memorial Plaque" in the museum so you can memorialize someone in your family that has passed, by making a donation to the building fund of \$500 or more. No upper limit. Their name will be permanently on display in the museum. Another very painless method that would help immensely, is to make arrangements with your financial advisor and the executor of your estate, to leave a portion of your estate to the RAINIER OREGON HISTORICAL MUSEUM, when you pass. I said it was painless! This is very easy and simple to do, I know because Joanne and I have done it. I'm hoping that more members and board members will follow suit. It would be greatly appreciated by the entire Rainier community for many years to come as they make use of the new museum. How can you get more bang for your buck than that? Please consider utilizing at least one of these options. Remember, as the board has said from the start, "this is not only a museum project, nor a Rainier project, but a community project." Thank you sincerely.....

Note: ROHM is a 501 c 3 corporation, which may help with the estate taxes.

In Memory of ROHM member Dayton Ray Thorp 1948 ~ 2021



Dayton Thorp joined the museum during the Rainier Days in the Park event at the ROHM booth on July 14, 2019. He was a member until his passing on October 21, 2021. He had a keen interest in Rainier's history and came to the ROHM museum often to look at our exhibits and books. He was born Feb. 17, 1948, in Portland, Oregon, and graduated from St. Helens High School in 1967. He worked at Erickson Airplane at



Central Point, Oregon, and later as head custodian for the St. Helens School District. During retirement, and after the passing of his wife, Beverly, he moved to Rainier, Oregon, to stay near all of his kids and grandkids as they were the joy of his life.

Logging in Beaver Springs (1873-1887)

By contributing writer Robert P. Van Natta

In the last issue we wrote of Sam Hudson after which the Hudson Community was named. In this issue we will address early logging and milling, but first we need to address the unique geology and geography that makes Rainier so different from many other areas. If you look at a world map, for instance, and count rivers as massive as the Columbia River, you will note that the list is fairly short. Now, if you take that short list and look for rivers of that size with abrupt square corners within a relatively short distance from their mouth (say less than 75 miles) the list gets really short. It's pretty astounding. The Columbia River made its way through the Cascade Mountain Range in a pretty straight line. When it got to Columbia County, it suddenly dodged 50 miles north before turning west again for its destination at the Pacific Ocean.

The lava flow, which we know as basalt rock, is visible beginning at St. Helens all down the river to Mayger along the river. At St. Helens, the basalt is barely above the river level (and an unseen portion creates a hard rock bottom in the Columbia River at St. Helens) and its elevation gradually increases particularly from Goble West creating effectively a wall on the Rainier side of the river.

It may seem odd to talk about geology in an article about logging, but when you stop to think of how many trees there were in Northern Columbia County which, but for the cliff along the river, could have been dragged to the river, rafted and shipped on the next tide to a sawmill anywhere along the lower river in the context of the technology available in the latter part of the 1800's, it's fair to say that there was a great need for a 'better way' to get the product to market.



An example of a splash dam constructed at Beaver Falls.

Beaver Creek was among the problems. Traditionally where the creeks and side streams weren't big enough to float wood products that you needed to get to market, folks would build a flume or splash dams (the first logging in Fox Creek, for example, involved a flume). The problem was that Beaver Creek because of the rock ridge along the edge of the Columbia River in the Rainier area doesn't flow to the Columbia River in any direct way. Beaver Creek flows westerly beyond Delena and then follows 'Beaver Falls Road' (old Highway 30) all the way to Clatskanie where it joins the Clatskanie River just west of the Clatskanie Yacht Club. From there (before the diking districts were built) the Clatskanie River wandered through the swamp, finally joining the Columbia River at Westport Bay (in Clatsop County not that far from the Wauna Papermill). Furthermore, as the Beaver Falls Road name suggests, in at least one place, it's in a narrow rock canyon and drops over

a major waterfall. It wasn't even feasible for men with axes and shovels to build a horse trail down Beaver Creek, and the distance was clear out of this county (pun intended).

Additionally, Beaver Creek is joined by north-flowing tributaries which include Lost Creek and Elk Creek in the Delena - Alston area as well as tributaries that follow both the Apiary Road and the Fern Hill Road most of the Way to Apiary. Its headwaters wrap around the south end of Fox Creek by extending East along Brownlee Road most of the way to Neer City Road while its main stem rises just north of Carmel Road (a side road off of Walker Road). Collectively, it's fair to say that Beaver Creek drains most of the Greater Rainier area except for the Goble/Beaver Homes/Shiloh Basin areas to the east and the more remote portions of Apiary (which lie south of the Apiary School).

Up Beaver Creek a few miles upstream from the Hudson area is what we now call Beaver Springs Road, there were other settlers including Bertha Wilson. Now the Wilsons were the Wilson part of the "Clark and Wilson" group who ultimately (After World War I and into the Great Depression) were a hugely successful timber and shipping company who harvested perhaps more old growth timber out of Columbia County during this era than anyone else. Their master logging camp was "Wilark" (WILson-clARK) located on the upper Clatskanie River where the St. Helens-Pittsburg Road crosses the Clatskanie. At its peak it had a population of 300 people and boasted its own school.



Bertha Wilson

The Wilsons weren't always quite so high flying. On September 16, 1873, Fred Wilson as captain grounded a ship on the infamous sandbar at the mouth of the Columbia River. The family lost a ship. Fred became the target of some very serious litigation, but he steered the family toward the lumber business. Anyhow, as far as Rainier goes, the focus turns to Bertha Wilson, a sister of Fred whom he had brought back from the "old country" (Sweden) around 1870. In the fall of 1871, she was enrolled in St. Helens Hall (a rather upscale women's boarding school in Portland) that she completed in two years. At age 22, shortly after finishing St. Helens Hall, she married Alexander Ring, of Finnish descent. A week before their wedding in November 1873, he purchased 80 acres on Beaver Springs Road near its intersection with Hutchinson Road (historically called "Dead End Road") about four miles south of Rainier (1). He built a sawmill there, and used bull teams to drag the logs to the mill and to transport the lumber to Rainier. Things went well in the lumber business until January 9, 1880 (2) when an extraordinary windstorm struck the Beaver Springs mill. Alexander Ring (Bertha's husband) ended up in St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland and died 10 days later leaving Bertha and her six-year-old daughter Lena to run the place which was a sawmill complete with a boardinghouse for the employees. Of course, Lena wasn't all the family. Bertha had twins who were very young, and she was great

with yet another child. Then the cook for the boarding house quit, and Bertha had to be the camp cook as well as manager of the mill and logging operation. She got one of her brothers to come help after about a month. Later she got a couple more brothers to help part time. By 1886 they had a logging to lumberyard business wherein they logged the timber, moved it to the mill with bull teams, sawed it, hauled it to Rainier in



The Wilson Mill, located near the intersection of Hutchinson and Beaver Spring Roads, was destroyed by fire in either 1886 or 1887.

oxcarts, transported it to Portland and sold it retail in a lumber yard. This worked until the fall of 1886 or early 1887 when the sawmill caught fire and burned up leaving nothing that could be reconstructed. The family had already been looking at a better mill site at Grays Harbor, so they rounded up the oxen, took them down to Rainier, barged them across the Columbia and walked them to Grays Harbor. The Wilsons in Rainier were no more.

The lesson in all this is very clear. Wood is heavy even when worked into lumber. Shipping it by oxcart down the DeBast Road was not the key to riches in the wood products business even in 1887. If it were, they would have built a new bigger mill in Beaver Springs and carried on, but.....

1. The references to roads are as they now exist. The route to town that was actually used in those days is less clear. People building wagon roads with a pick and shovel avoided swamps and creek crossings at all costs. The current alignment of Beaver Springs Road and Fern Hill Road passes through a lot of wetlands and crosses various branches of Beaver Creek several times on the way to town making it a very unlikely route in my opinion. Similarly, going south on Beaver Springs Road and cutting over to Neer City Road on Brownlee Road makes no sense because Goble is probably closer, and the Fox Creek Canyon precludes more northerly cutovers to the Neer City Road. This writer surmises that there was a route from the area of the mill-now long forgotten that hooked up with Debast Road perhaps in part on a branch of DeBast Road now known as Cedar Lane. This would be consistent with the road designs of the era that followed ridgetops to avoid swamps, bridges, and sidehills.

2. The weather issues with the Wilson Mill were not isolated. It seems that settlers from the Nehalem Valley spent much of the summer of 1879 building a road through heavy timber from Pittsburg to Bunker Hill. Specifically, it is reported that 50 Volunteers spent six weeks, zigging and zagging to avoid trees where possible trying to come up with a dirt road that a wagon could use at least in dry weather. It is reported that after several days of rain, on January 9, 1880, a "near Cyclone" rose resulting in more large trees being blown into the road that they had to remove to build the road in the first place.

Source: Columbia County History (1966 Volume I, page 55). Photos courtesy of Mike Clark and Emily M. Wilson.

NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST QUARTER

(8/22/21-1/24/22)

We have 256 memberships* now.

Beth Bailey
Thomas Baird, Sr.
Gail Brundage
Phil & Linda Derby
Wallace & Gina Dunn
Robert DuPlessis
Casey Garrett
Sheryle Roberts Hamilton
Mike and Dianna Lardy
Hollis McMilan
Linda Nelson
Todd & Janet Nelson
Andrew Niemi
Russell & Donna Patching
Landon Robinson
Dale Strom
Ron Wade
Kim Worrall & Tammy Tack

LIFETIME MEMBERS

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

HONORARY MEMBERS

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

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

Individual and family members who renew their memberships for 2022 by March 15 can receive a **free membership to the Oregon Historical Society**. All paid and honorary members will continue to receive our newsletter.

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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.

Did you know?

Did you know that a former resident of Rainier died on the Titanic? *True*, Frank M. Warren Sr. came to Rainier in 1851 with his parents when he was three and left six years later when they settled in Portland. While in Rainier his father ran a saw mill on the water front. Warren, years later, founded the Warren Packing Company, a salmon canning business, and was considered a pioneer of the salmon canning industry on the Columbia River. Frank and his wife Anna went on a three-month trip to Europe to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary and were returning on the Titanic as first-class passengers. When the ship was sinking, Frank Warren helped Anna onto a lifeboat and then stepped back onto the ship. (ref; Wikipedia.- Frank M. Warren Sr.)

Did you know that Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the Little House on the Prairie series, fashioned one of her characters after a childhood friend who years later lived in Rainier? *True*, three different girls from Laura Ingalls Wilder's childhood — Nellie Owens, Genevieve Masters and Stella Gilbert — were the basis for the fictional Nellie Oleson. Nellie Owens's parents ran the local mercantile in Walnut Grove, Minnesota. Nellie years later married Henry Francis Kirry in 1893 and settled in Rainier in 1899. (ref; Wikipedia -.Nellie Oleson)



Watercolor sketch of Rainier Oregon done by M. H. Kruse in 1900. Kruse made a series of watercolors of towns where the freighter he traveled on docked. This image shows the waterfront and the Congregational Church standing at the corner of East 4th St. & East C St. The church was built in 1896 but torn down in 1930. This watercolor, classified as an American Primitive (or Folk Art) is a rare find. (Mike Clark collection)

Rainier Oregon Historical Museum

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