



ByGone Times

Quarterly Newsletter of the Troutdale Historical Society

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Honoring Our Extraordinary Volunteers

This year's Annual Volunteer Lunch was a heartfelt celebration of the amazing individuals who make the Troutdale Historical Society thrive—our volunteers! The afternoon was filled with delicious food and refreshing drinks, all made possible by the incredible efforts of our Events Committee. Their dedication ensured the day was both enjoyable and memorable. President Dave Ripma and Director Chris Garza delivered moving speeches, expressing profound gratitude for the countless hours our volunteers dedicate to preserving Troutdale's history. Their words were a reminder of the invaluable contributions each of you makes to our shared mission. The room was alive with laughter, conversation, and camaraderie as everyone reflected on the year's successes and the friendships that make our work so meaningful. We are endlessly grateful for the passion, time, and energy our volunteers bring to this organization. Thank you for helping make 2024 another remarkable year—your efforts keep Troutdale's history alive for generations to come!



Holiday Cheer at Stories & Smiles with Santa

The Barn Exhibit Hall Museum sparkled with holiday spirit on November 30th as we hosted our annual Stories & Smiles with Santa event. Over 165 people attended this free community gathering, and the joy was infectious as families came together to celebrate the season. Guests were greeted with plenty of cider, a mountain of cookies, and loads of festive cheer. Local author and illustrator Angel Garza added a creative touch with a coloring circle for the kids and a "Letters to Santa" station, where children shared their holiday dreams in handwritten letters. Of course, the highlight of the day was a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus, played by the ever-charming Tom and Barbara Slyter. With their jolly smiles and endless patience, they listened to Christmas wishes and posed for photos, making memories to last a lifetime. This event would not have been possible without the dedication of our incredible volunteers. A huge thank you to Joy Beldin, Jamie LaCour, Helen Wand, Margaret Rice, Bev Law, Angel Garza, Dave Ripma, and Julia Warner, who ensured everything ran smoothly and made the day magical

for our guests. Finally, to the community of Troutdale and surrounding areas: your enthusiasm and participation are what keep the holiday spirit alive and thriving. Whether it was a child's laughter or the warmth of neighbors reconnecting, the event reminded us of the joy that comes from sharing traditions. Thank you for making Stories & Smiles with Santa a cherished part of the season. Here's to many more years of celebrating together and spreading the holiday magic!



Welcome Aboard, Deborah Elliott

We're excited to welcome Deborah Elliott as the new volunteer bookkeeper at Troutdale Historical Society! With a strong background in finance and accounting, Deborah's skills will be invaluable in ensuring our financial stability. Her dedication helps us maintain efficient operations, so we can focus on offering engaging programs and projects for our community. We're fortunate to have Deborah's expertise on board and can't wait to see the positive impact she'll have on THS. Please join us in thanking Deborah for her passion and commitment to preserving Troutdale's history. Welcome to the THS family, Deborah!



Ready to Tour the Gorge: A Glimpse into Early 20th Century Travel Fashion

Our newest display at the Barn Exhibit Hall Museum invites you to step back in time to the golden age of travel along the Historic Columbia River Highway, which also complements our existing exhibit on early travel. Opening for travel in 1916, the Historic Columbia River Highway became the first scenic highway in America. Designed by visionary engineer Samuel Lancaster, it was more than just a road—it was a work of art that blended seamlessly with the rugged beauty of the Columbia River Gorge. The highway features breathtaking views, stone bridges, elegant guardrails, and scenic viewpoints, providing travelers an unparalleled way to experience the natural wonders of the Gorge. The road's completion in 1922 marked a new era of tourism for the region. Visitors traveled from across the country to explore the highway, donning their finest clothes for this special journey. Cars of the time, though slower than today's vehicles, offered a sense of adventure as families and friends meandered through waterfalls, forests, and cliffsides. Our exhibits showcase artifacts, photographs, and stories from this golden age of travel. Learn about the highway's impact on the region, its role in boosting tourism, and its lasting legacy as a symbol of innovation and beauty. Relive the charm and excitement of America's first scenic highway—visit our museum today to discover the magic of this historic route!

A Rare Find: The Plantation Saddle from Sweetbriar Farm

Nestled in the heart of Sweetbriar Farm's history, this stunning plantation saddle is a true gem of equestrian craftsmanship. Donated to the Troutdale Historical Society by Helen Althaus, it has been carefully examined by saddle expert Hans Biglazjer, who identified it as a genuine plantation saddle, made between 1890 and 1920. Plantation saddles were designed for long hours of riding across expansive landscapes, prioritizing comfort and durability. Their wide, flat seats and extended skirts evenly distribute the rider's weight, making them ideal for extended use over varying terrain. Known for their practicality and sturdy construction, plantation saddles have become an enduring symbol of equestrian history. This particular example is in remarkable condition and boasts unique features. The barn-red-painted tree is a hallmark of Ben Schroeder's Saddle Tree Co. in Madison, Indiana. Schroeder's factory was known for producing these distinctive saddle trees and painting them with a signature barn red color, which remains visible on this piece. The saddle is also a "Kentucky stitch down," named for its intricate stitching method, and is crafted from high-quality leather sourced from southern states such as Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, or the Carolinas. While the original canvas under panel has been replaced with leather, the saddle retains its historical integrity. It reflects the skilled artistry and tradition of a bygone era, offering a tangible connection to equestrian craftsmanship of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As one of the few remaining examples of its kind in the Portland area, this plantation saddle is a true treasure. Its preservation ensures that future generations can appreciate the artistry and history it represents.





100 Years Ago

By: Twila Mysinger

Barn Exhibit Hall

Thurs - Sund/ Noon - 3pm

Rail Depot

Mon - Wed / 9am - 3pm
Thurs - Sun / 9am - 5pm

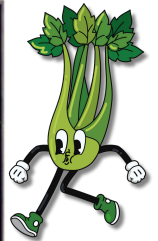
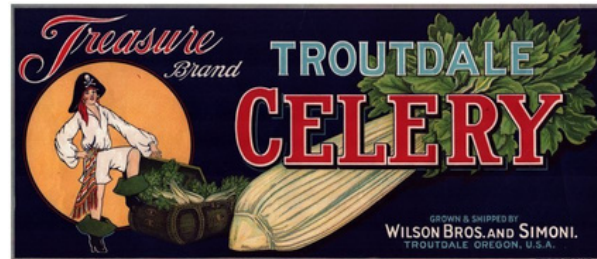
Harlow House

Thurs - Sun / Noon - 3pm

Jack Kiyoshi Fujii was born February 3, 1925 in Troutdale to parents Bukichi and Yoshino (Yamakado) Fujii. Jack and his seven siblings attended the Troutdale Grade School, and the photo is his class picture from 1936. The Fujiis were vegetable and berry farmers and had over 450 acres under cultivation at one time, with a mix of owned and leased land. In May 1942, the family was ordered to report to the Pacific Livestock Exposition Center in Portland as part of the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during WW II. They volunteered to move to a Farm Security Administration camp near Nyssa, Oregon to work in the sugar beet fields. Nyssa was a tent camp and each canvas tent had a wood stove and a single light bulb, per encyclopedia.densho.org. The Fujii family had decided that lifestyle was preferable to staying at the Center in Portland. Jack graduated from Nyssa High in 1943, was drafted into the Army in April 1945 and served in Europe. He was at the Oregon Vocational School at Klamath Falls in 1950, which was a school specifically designed to train returning WW II veterans. Jack worked on the family farm until he retired in 1986. Jack married Katherine Jobst in 1982 and he passed away in 1993. More information is available in Clarence Merston's book, "Along the Sandy Our Nikkei Neighbors" which may be found in our Gift Shop or purchased online at troutdalehistory.org

Last Chance to See the Celery Exhibit!

Time is running out to catch the Celery Exhibit at the Depot Museum! Dive into the rich and unexpected history of Troutdale's claim to fame: White Celery. Yes, you read that right—our little town once ruled the celery world, and this is your last chance to uncover the juicy details before the exhibit closes. In the early 1900s, Troutdale's fertile soil and abundant water supply from the Sandy and Columbia Rivers made it a hub for agriculture. But it was White Celery, with its crisp texture and sweet, nutty flavor, that put us on the map. Dubbed the "Cadillac of Celery," it was so prized that it graced the tables of Portland's finest restaurants and hotels. Local farmers became celery celebrities, shipping their crop across the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The exhibit showcases this legacy with photographs, farming tools, and a trophy for first prize of the Celery King Competition from 1924! Don't miss the chance to see vintage ads that boast Troutdale as "The Celery Capital of Oregon." Come celebrate this quirky slice of Troutdale's history and discover why White Celery wasn't just food—it was an icon. The exhibit will be on display until February 2nd 2025, so don't miss your chance to dig into this flavorful chapter of our past! Visit the Depot Museum today and let's give a crisp cheer for Troutdale's legendary celery!



All Aboard with Jean Halliwell: Union Pacific's Trailblazing Nurse-Stewardess

One of our prized artifacts is a 16" statuette of Jean P. Halliwell in her Union Pacific "Registered Nurse-Stewardess" uniform. Starting in the 1930s, Union Pacific employed nurses to assist passengers who were ill, traveling with babies, or journeying alone. This prestigious role required American Nurses Association membership and came with strict—now outdated—standards for age, appearance, and marital status. Jean, born in Idaho in 1914, earned her nursing degree from the University of Utah. By 1940, she worked for the railroad in Portland, where her statuette references the "Portland Rose" route to Chicago. During WWII, Jean joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, serving as a Second Lieutenant until 1946. She later continued her nursing career at hospitals and Hill Field Air Base. Her story shines as a unique piece of Union Pacific history.

Celebrating Our Volunteers: Thank You for Your Service

As we reflect on the events, programs, and successes of 2024, we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to every volunteer who has contributed their time, skills, and dedication to the Troutdale Historical Society this year. You are the backbone of our organization, and we truly could not function without you. Volunteers are at the heart of our mission to preserve and share the rich history of Troutdale and the surrounding areas. From assisting with events like the Summer Barnyard Concert and Speakeasy Swing & Ice Cream Soiree to helping with museum docents, gift shop support, and technical assistance, your efforts have kept our programs running and our doors open to the community. Your contributions ensure that our historical treasures and local stories continue to inspire and educate visitors of all ages. The Troutdale Historical Society has been a volunteer-led organization since its founding in 1968. This means we have relied on the passion, time, and hard work of community members like you for 56 years—and in 2025, we will celebrate 57 incredible years of service. Through all of these years, our volunteers have been integral to building the vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive space that THS represents today. Our volunteers bring so much to the table, from welcoming new visitors to assisting behind the scenes. Whether you joined us this year for a few hours or dedicated countless days, your commitment has made a difference. You've supported events, educational programs, fundraising, museum operations, and so much more. Every moment you spent contributing your talents has strengthened our ability to share Troutdale's history with our community and beyond. Thank you for your kindness, passion, and generosity. Your work does not go unnoticed. We are proud to celebrate and recognize all that you do to ensure the history and stories of Troutdale are shared for generations to come. To each and every one of you, thank you. We are endlessly grateful for your time, your support, and your belief in the mission of the Troutdale Historical Society. Here's to continuing our journey together as we step into another year of community service and historical preservation. We look forward to celebrating history with you for many more years to come!



Thank You



FaceBook: [TroutdaleHistory.org](https://www.facebook.com/TroutdaleHistory.org)



Online: www.TroutdaleHistory.org



Instagram: [BarnMuseum](https://www.instagram.com/BarnMuseum)

thank you



After over a decade of dedicated service, our incredible Treasurer, bookkeeper, docent, and friend, Marilee Thompson, is retiring from her role at the Troutdale Historical Society. Marilee has been a guiding light for THS, keeping our books balanced and our spirits high with her dedication and passion for local history. As a long-time member and volunteer, Marilee has contributed countless hours to preserving and celebrating Troutdale's story. While we'll miss her behind the scenes, we're excited for her to enjoy some well-deserved time for herself (and maybe even some history-making adventures of her own)! Thank you, Marilee, for your years of service, leadership, and heart. You've left a lasting legacy at THS, and we're forever grateful.

NEW MEMBERS

Angela Ballard - Brett Ballard-Beach - Peggy Carlson - Mara Dale - Deborah Elliott - Merry Farmer - Ellen Green - Susan Schulmerich - Eellitta Stone - Thomas Gray - Don & Jeri Anderson - Juliana Garza - Jamie LaCour

IN MEMORY

~ In Memory of Leona Balch ~

The Balch Family & Friends

~ In Memory of Mario Ayala ~

Joe & Lu Ayala

Marlene Burns

Cathy Peetz

Sharon Petri & Tom Arbuckle

~ In Honor of Clarence & Colleen Mershon ~

Carole Kawamura

~ In Memory of Dorothy Kerslake ~

Richard Kerslake

~ In Memory of Jo & Vaden Callister ~

Nancy Buley

~ In Memory of Joann Otto ~

Len & Gloria Otto

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

McMenamins

HISTORY PUBS

~Blackberry Hall at McMenamins Edgefield~

2126 SW Halsey St, Troutdale, OR 97060

Doors at 6:00pm / Program at 7:00pm / \$5

Monday, January 13th:

Simon Benson: Lumber King and Civic Leader

Presented by: **Sig Unander**

Simon Benson, a Norwegian immigrant born in 1851, shaped Oregon's history through his contributions as a lumber magnate and philanthropist. Landmarks like the Benson Bridge, Benson Hotel, and iconic bubblers honor his legacy. Historian Sig Unander explores Benson's impact on the Historic Columbia River Highway, the World Forestry Center, and more in his engaging presentations.

Monday, February 10th:

Oregon's Others: Gender, Civil Liberties, and the Surveillance State in the Early 20th Century

Presented by: **Kim Jensen**

Join us in celebrating Black History Month at McMenamins Edgefield! Explore the compelling history of civil liberties in *Oregon's Others* by Kimberly Jensen. Uncover stories of exclusion, resistance, and the fight for human rights during WWI's surveillance state era—where race, gender, and class shaped struggles that still inspire social justice movements today.

Exciting History Pub events are coming your way! We're busy booking incredible presenters, and you won't want to miss out on these engaging talks. For more dates and details, follow us online at www.TroutdaleHistory.org, on Facebook, and Instagram. Stay tuned for updates and be the first to know about these fun and educational events. It's going to be a history-filled season, and we can't wait to see you there!

Yarn at the Barn

Yarn at the Barn Returns in 2025!

Presented by: **Jamie LaCour**

Get ready to craft, create, and connect! Our free fiber arts program is back, kicking off on the first Wednesday of February from 10:00 am until noon. Join us monthly at the Barn Exhibit Hall to learn new skills, share techniques, and enjoy crafting camaraderie. The program is FREE and open to ages 14+—supplies available for beginners. Don't miss out!

Feb 2nd - Mar 5th - Apr 2nd - May 7th - Jun 4th - Jul 2nd
Aug 6th - Sep 3rd - Oct 1st - Nov 5th - Dec 3rd

Sharon Nesbit Celebrates Her Birthday at McMenamins Edgefield

Sharon Nesbit, affectionately known as the “Queen of Troutdale,” celebrated her birthday in grand fashion at McMenamins Edgefield, a landmark she was instrumental in saving. Surrounded by family, friends, and admirers, the gathering paid tribute to Sharon’s extraordinary life and dedication to preserving Troutdale’s rich history. The celebration extended online, where Sharon’s birthday post on social media received an overwhelming response. Over 200 likes, more than 20 shares, and 140 comments poured in, filled with admiration and gratitude. McMenamins History wrote, “Happy birthday Sharon and thank you so much for all your dedication and your important role in preserving McMenamins Edgefield. We love the Queen of Troutdale!” Others, like Carol Reynolds, called her their hero, while Leslie Radke said, “Never has been and never will be another like her! Happy Birthday, Sharon!!!” Born on September 3, 1939, in Nyssa, Oregon, Sharon discovered her passion for storytelling at an early age. By 15, she was setting type for the Sandy Post, beginning a journalism career that would span decades. After working for the Seaside Signal, she joined The Gresham Outlook in 1968, covering local government and becoming a beloved columnist. Her sharp insights and engaging writing earned national accolades from the National Federation of Press Women and state awards from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Though journalism brought her recognition, Sharon’s true legacy lies in her tireless efforts to preserve Troutdale’s history. A founding member of the Troutdale Historical Society (THS) in 1968 and its first executive director, she spearheaded the restoration of historic landmarks such as the Harlow House and the 1907 rail depot. Sharon’s most iconic achievement was saving the Multnomah County Poor Farm, now McMenamins Edgefield, from demolition. Her advocacy ensured the site’s transformation into a thriving community hub. Her book, *Vintage Edgefield*, tells the story of this remarkable effort and underscores her dedication to preserving the stories behind the buildings. Beyond restoring landmarks, Sharon infused life into Troutdale’s history through exhibits and programs. Under her leadership, the THS created engaging displays like the inaugural Smelt Run! exhibit at the Barn Exhibit Hall, making the city’s past accessible to all. Sharon’s contributions have earned her numerous accolades over the years. She has been honored as an Oregon Woman of Achievement by the March of Dimes, Citizen of the



Kelly Broomall and Sharon Nesbit celebrating her birthday at McMenamins Edgefield 2024

Year by the City of Troutdale, and Communicator of Achievement by Oregon Press Women. Both Troutdale and Gresham celebrate official “Sharon Nesbit Days”—May 1st in Gresham for her journalistic achievements and September 3rd in Troutdale for her contributions to heritage preservation. Despite her many awards, it is Sharon’s warmth, humor, and ability to connect with people that truly set her apart. She has a gift for making history feel personal, inspiring young writers, and fostering a deep appreciation for Troutdale’s past. Her approachable nature and boundless energy have endeared her to generations, ensuring her influence is felt far beyond the historical society. Sharon’s work has also extended to state and regional preservation efforts. She has served on numerous committees, including the Oregon Geographic Names Board and the advisory group for the Vista House restoration, further cementing her impact on Oregon’s cultural heritage. Even in retirement, Sharon remains an active presence at the Troutdale Historical Society. She continues to volunteer her time and expertise, helping preserve artifacts and share stories for future generations. Her leadership has transformed THS into a cornerstone of the community, ensuring that Troutdale’s history will be cherished for years to come. Sharon’s recent birthday celebration was not just a milestone but a testament to her enduring legacy. Friends, family, and admirers gathered to honor a woman who gives so much to her community. As the Queen of Troutdale, Sharon Nesbit’s contributions remind us of the power of passion and dedication to shape a community’s identity.



Discover Troutdale's New Ch'ak Ch'ak Trail!

Troutdale’s newest addition to outdoor adventure, the Ch’ak Ch’ak Trail, is officially open! This scenic 3-mile segment of the historic 40-Mile Loop starts at NE Harlow Road, just across I-84 from downtown Troutdale, and winds through the city’s northern industrial area. From there, it connects to levee trails near the Troutdale airport and continues onward to Chinook Landing Marine Park in Fairview. The name “Ch’ak Ch’ak,” meaning Bald Eagle in Chinuk Wawa, was chosen in collaboration with local Indigenous experts to honor the heritage of the Troutdale area. Future expansions will extend the trail along NE Harlow Road to the upcoming Sandy Riverfront Park and downtown Troutdale. This connection will provide breathtaking views of the Sandy River Delta and open pathways to the Columbia Gorge. Get outside, explore this incredible new trail, and enjoy Troutdale’s growing network of scenic, historic pathways!

A Big Thank You to all of Our Sponsors



Edgefield



A Message from the President of THS



Dave Ripma

Thanks to our members and volunteers for the completion of another successful year preserving and sharing the history of Troutdale and its surrounding area. In 2024, the Troutdale Historical Society presented programs and events including First Fridays in Troutdale, McMenamins History Pubs, our summer Barnyard Concert, a program about the 1962 Columbus Day Storm, and two Speakeasy swing dance evenings. I especially thank those THS members who volunteer to staff the museums, gatherings and events which preserve the history of the community of Troutdale and nearby areas, and stimulate an interest in, and knowledge of our past. Let's all continue to help and support THS in 2025.

With best wishes, sincerely,
THS Board President
David Ripma

THS BOARD

Executive Board:

- President: Dave Ripma
- Vice President: Norm Thomas
- Treasurer: Tina Bruce
- Secretary: Jeff Neiger

Board Members:

- Helen Wand - Rip Caswell -
- Joyce Belcher - Ann Chatterton

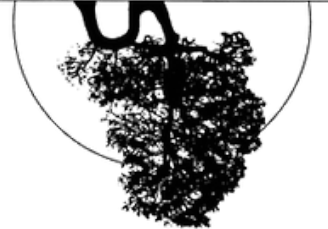
Past Presidents:

- Norm Thomas, Erin Janssens,
- Bettianne Goetz, Sharon Nesbit,
- Len Otto, Dave Ripma,
- Helen Wand

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TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Troutdale, OR 97060



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Troutdale, OR, 97060

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732 E Historic Columbia River Hwy
Troutdale, OR, 97060

Phone: 503-661-2164
Email: Troutdalehistory@gmail.com
Website: www.TroutdaleHistory.org

The Troutdale Historical Society is organized and shall be operated exclusively to gather, preserve and make available museum, record, and other material relating to the history of the community of Troutdale, the northern portion of the Sandy River, and nearby areas to stimulate an interest in, and knowledge of the locality's past.

TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WWW.TROUTDALEHISTORY.ORG

JOIN US AND ENJOY FREE ACCESS TO ALL OUR MUSEUMS, 10% OFF AT THE BARN STORE GIFT SHOP, QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS DELIVERED RIGHT TO YOUR INBOX OR MAILBOX, AND \$10 OFF YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH THE OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

- \$20 Individual Membership
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- \$100 Lovers Oak Membership
- \$250 Business Sponsor Membership
- \$500 Corporate Sponsor Membership
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Troutdale, OR 97060

Thank you for your support!