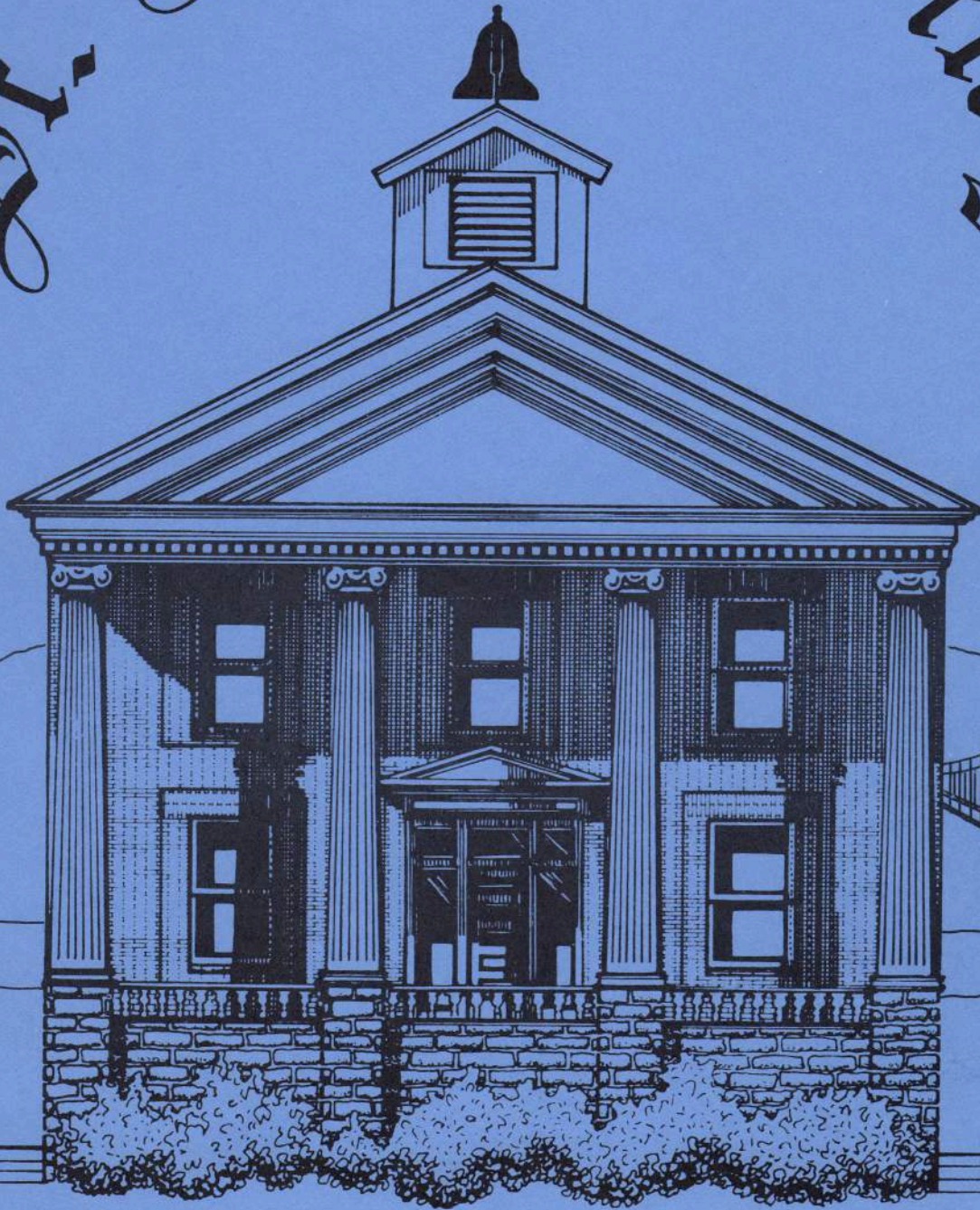


# St. Johns Heritage



VOLUME 5

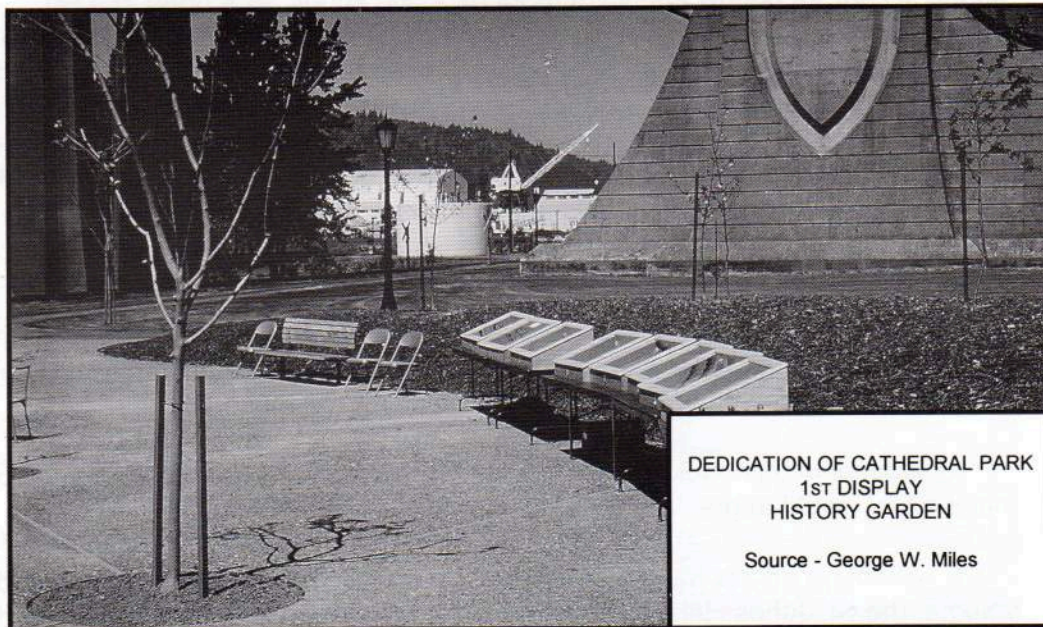
JANUARY 1997



## FORWARD

This is the fifth in a series of issues published by the St. Johns Heritage Association. The first issue was entitled "St. Johns History" and numbered "Bicentennial First Issue". The second issue was entitled "St. Johns History" and included the notes "Bicentennial Issue, Corrected and Enlarged". The third issue was entitled "St. Johns Heritage Association" and was numbered "Fourth Edition, First Printing". Unfortunately these issues had different titles and were not dated, and the third issue was numbered out of sequence. Further, the note on the second issue could be misleading. Because the second issue does not contain about fifteen pages of material included in the first issue, the second issue should not be considered to be a replacement for the first issue as the note may indicate.

To provide order and continuity to all issues of this serial publication, the Association has adopted the title of "St. Johns Heritage" for future issues starting with the fourth. As this is the fifth issue, it is numbered Volume 5 as shown on the top of this page. The Heritage Association suggests that the first three issues be considered to be volumes 1, 2, 3 of this continuing series.



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St. Johns Heritage Association

7224 N. Washburne Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97217

Helen Miles, President

**ST. JOHNS HERITAGE ASSOCIATION  
JANUARY 1997**

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Mrs. June Armstrong Cusic

St. Johns Heritage Association is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Oregon Historical Society. All funds received from the sale of this book will be used toward a future book and furthering of our plans for the museum.

Copies of this book will be sent to libraries, schools, universities and colleges that we feel would appreciate them.

Although efforts have been made to authenticate information contained in this volume, the St. Johns Heritage Association is not responsible for inadvertent distortion of events, facts or figures by the various writers.

We are interested in receiving, for storage within the archives of the museum, historical photographs, artifacts and information of St. Johns and the surrounding areas.

St. Johns Heritage Association



## A TRIBUTE TO THOMAS ANTONIO "SCOOT" LIND

He has been a resident of St. Johns since 1907 when he and his father and mother, two brothers and sister emigrated to St. Johns, Oregon from Kragero, Norway. His father was the only English speaking person in the family.

He had to quit grade school in the sixth grade to go to work to help support his family. To read his historical stories and remembrances one would think "Scoot" had a broader educational background!

He married Flossie Harris and they had two sons - Thomas Stanley Lind and Robert Clifford Lind.

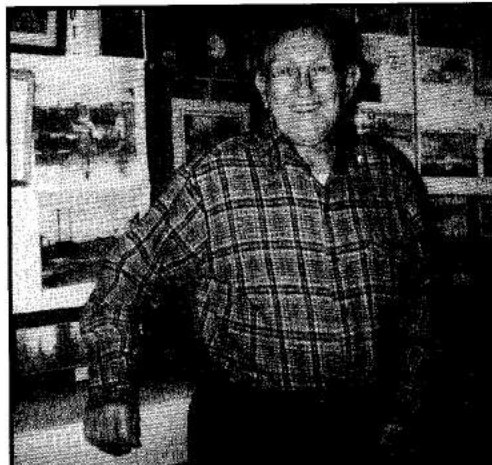
He worked at various occupations until he landed a job with the Portland Woolen Mills. He worked up to Maintenance Engineer where he remained until the mill closed. He was then hired by Northern Specialties as the Maintenance Supervisor. Climbing up the Woolen Mill hill for so many years must have played some part in his being able to celebrate his 100th birthday June 2, 1996.

"Scoot" is the oldest member of the St. Johns Bachelor Club. He has been active in the club until age and accidents made it impossible to attend the meetings. He was especially honored by the Bachelor Club in May 1996 at their annual banquet. The Bachelor Club has named one of their rooms "The Lind Room" in honor of Thomas "Scoot", Halvor "Grit", and Donald "Bat" Lind.

He has been a St. Johns historian for many years writing for the St. Johns Review. Later when the St. Johns Heritage Association was formed, he became a prolific writer, and a great resource for the books of the Heritage Association. He has been blessed with a fantastic memory, remembering names, places and details that most people have forgotten over the years. We are grateful for all of his work in keeping the history of St. Johns alive and helping to preserve this for future generations. "Scoot" has donated many pictures and artifacts to the Heritage Museum. For this we thank him.

Who could have foreseen that an eleven year old Norwegian immigrant would be such a wonderful asset to his community and would leave a great heritage of information for the coming generations to enjoy.

"Scoot" did not live to see this book published. He died early morning on November 11, 1996.



THOMAS "SCOOT" LIND  
Courtesy Tom S. Lind



**MR. THOMAS (SCOOT) LIND, ESTEEMED FRIEND**  
(A Poem Written By Percy T. Freeman, St. Johns Poet May 8, 1937)

'Twas hard to quit the game we did so love to play  
To give way to a generation that feels the younger day.  
When first we met, my days of sport were nearly done  
For my legs were faltering and 'twas might hard to run".  
Still with courage did I stick never thinking I would fail  
But now I have to watch, as I stand behind the rail.  
My heart's still in the game as I have to stand aside,  
For my playing days are over and I cannot hit the stride.  
After I had ceased the game, I always watched you play,  
Never failing to take chances on all that came your way.  
How often I have watched you, as you would dodge and **SCOOT**  
When you'd receive the ball from some opponent's husky boot.  
Though our sporting days have pass'd, we still can love the game,  
And our game old hearts will always be the same.  
We may miss the cheering of all those faithful fans,  
But that friendship that is ours, forever will it stand.

From your sincere friend - P. T. Freeman



HALVOR "GRIT" LIND - THOMAS ANTONIO "SCOOT" LIND Courtesy of Lind Family



## INTRODUCTION

Researching and writing for this book has been done entirely by amateurs interested in the preservation of the history of this area. Special credit should be given to many who spent countless hours on this endeavor.

Our thanks to Angela and Ross "Mickey" Grantz of Medical Printing Service who gave generously of their time and advised us on printing techniques and picture selection. "Mickey" is a former St. Johns resident which makes it a lot more meaningful to be involved in the printing of this edition of our book.

To the following St. Johns Heritage Association Committee members who donated much time and effort to the completion of this publication:

Thomas A. Lind	.....	Historical consultant and writer
Donald Ball	.....	Research, writing, committee
Billye Cox	.....	Writing, committee
Florence Evans	.....	Research, writing, committee
June Fox	.....	Writing, committee
Lucille Lindstrom	.....	Writing, committee
Helen Miles	.....	Research, writing, committee
Elsie Norris	.....	Research, writing, committee
Norma Regan	.....	Writing, committee, computer work
Louis Stone	.....	Writing, committee

We want to thank the St. Johns YWCA for their generous permission to let us meet and edit our stories and do the other things needed to be handled to produce this book. Also, our heartfelt thanks to our President, Helen Miles for opening her home to the committee for the initial meetings to select material, photos, and other decisions needed to get started on this publication.

Thanks must be made to the many other people who submitted stories and articles and photos for this fifth volume. Without their contributions this book could not be completed.



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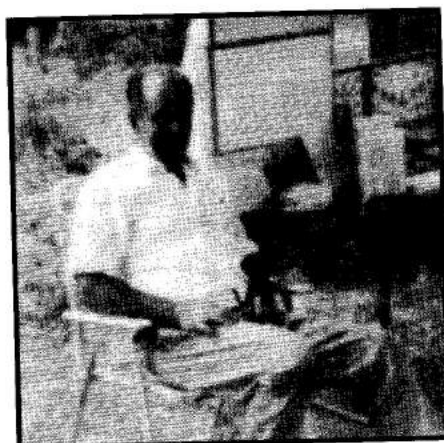
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HOWARD GALBRAITH  
FOUNDER, ST. JOHNS HERITAGE ASSOCIATION





## **THE OLD ST. JOHNS CITY HALL**

### **A ST. JOHNS HISTORICAL TREASURE By Florence Denton Evans**

In 1905 talks began about the need for construction of a facility to house city officials and firefighters. A lot located at the junction of Burlington and Philadelphia, to be used for city purposes, was offered by C. Oihus. The City Council paid earnest money to hold the property and later issued \$10,000 in Municipal Bonds for the building of the new City Hall. It was designed by W. W. Goodrich to resemble a pre-Civil War mansion.

In the fall of 1906 St. Johns contracted with Youngerdorf & Son to complete the building by January 1, 1907 for \$7,953.00. This would include the foundation, outside walls, roof, inside partitions and rough inside flooring. Brick manufactured at the St. Johns Brickwork was used in the building. Mr. James C. Scott was the first man to make improvements on the hill above the waterfront. He was one of the founders of the waterworks which served the city and his first tank was located at the site of the City Hall. Before construction could begin the 120 ft. well on the property had to be filled in and graded over.

Youngerdorf & Son failed to finish the building by January 26, 1907. In April of that year the City Attorney reported substantial progress of necessary legal procedures for the city to take over the building. Crook & Walton Company were hired to do the interior and they asked for a 90 day extension as they were not able to have access to the building until April 29, 1907.

In July of 1907 the finished building was occupied by city officials. The Council Chamber, a meeting hall, three large committee rooms and rest rooms were located on the upper floor. The office of Mayor, Treasurer, Recorder, City Attorney, City Engineer and Marshall were located on the main floor. The main floor also contained another meeting hall and a small gymnasium. In the basement were the Fire Department, a boiler room and four jail cells. The cells measured 6 feet and 6 inches high by 4 feet and 6 inches wide. When St. Johns was annexed to the City of Portland in 1915 the Portland police and firemen occupied the building.

At a later date public rest rooms were located in front of the City Hall. They were a "pill box" like structure and were partially underground. The top was used for a band stand. After being used for sometime they gradually fell into disuse and were closed. They stood for many years until the 1964 City Hall restoration.

In June 1932 the firemen designed a plan to build a pool and rock garden on the lawn area of the City Hall. Volunteers were to do this as an off duty project. The pool was 36 feet long and 16 feet wide and the center piece was a miniature bridge. Mt. Tabor's extinct volcano provided lava rock for a mountain. A stream of water fell from the mountain top through a water wheel to supply fresh water for brook trout which were introduced to the pond in 1934. A lodge built of logs became a stop for a toy train and later housed a loudspeaker which played seasonal music. A low fence and walkway surrounded the rock garden and pool and underwater lights were installed for nighttime viewing. The new Fire Station was opened in 1954 and the rock garden, pool and bridge were abandoned.

At the start of the 1964 restoration of the City Hall a "headache ball" demolished the vacated public restrooms in about five hours. A light pole on the Burlington Street

During the fund raising months local firemen brought a First Aid Station Wagon to the bank parking lot on three Saturdays to show and explain the equipment it carried. The vehicle was equipped to revive three persons at the same time. Not only did it carry an inhalator-respirator but also a cot, stretcher, tourniquets, splints, burn treatment items, material for bleeding, antidotes for poisoning, a doctor's kit, blankets, sheets and ropes - if they needed to rope off an area. Because of its efficiency and added speed in traffic, the station wagon was used more often in small accidents than the larger disaster cars. In case of a major catastrophe it could suffice until the major disaster car arrived.

Jewel Sundquist reported that every fireman was fully qualified to administer first aid. Every two years they were required to attend the instructor's First Aid Class, taught by the nation's top instructors. They attended two hour sessions once a week for ten weeks and then must pass an hour's written examination.

In April 1955 Larry Hirschman, chairman of the Peninsula-St. Johns Merchants Committee, announced that May 6 would be the day on which participating merchants would donate a percentage of their profits to the Shirlee Ann fund. By then a resuscitator had been located at the St. Johns Fire Station. Its use could be requested by calling UN 0579. Fund raising continued toward the new goal of financing a first aid car to carry the new equipment.

By May 1955, the fund had reached a total of \$2,584.36. St. Johns businessmen (Coronet, B & C Department Store, Shannon Auto Supply, Western Auto Supply, Bonham & Currier, The Man's Shop, Peninsula Diamond Shop, St. Johns Hardware, St. Johns Rexall, Tidewater Associated Station and Radke Auto Electric) contributed \$237.50 during that time.

A June 7 date was planned for "Dinner is Served" at Skyline School, sponsored by Skyline Post #172, the Grange, the PTA and the County Sheriffs. It was their combined contribution to the Shirlee Ann drive.

By June 30 Don Lind (then treasurer of the St. Johns Businessmen's Club) had checked the Shirlee Ann account which totaled \$3,738.41 at that time and wrote letters to the Mayor and Council, asking them to begin steps to legalize the transfer of funds from the bank to the City Purchasing Department. The City Council accepted the donation, but not without some embarrassment to it and Fire Commissioner Stanley W. Earl. The embarrassment came from the hard financial fact that keeping the car manned around the clock would require six men, a payroll outlay of \$25,000 a year not considered in the fire bureau budget. Under terms of the city charter amendment by which the city of St. Johns became a part of Portland, a crew of five firemen must be maintained at the St. Johns station to fight fires so the personnel could not be split. "Maybe we'll just have to have the fire apparatus make every run with the first aid car whether there is a fire or not", Commissioner Earl commented.

On August 18 the Shirlee Ann check presentation ceremony was held at a Portland Council Meeting. Attending were Mrs. Wilma Van Alstine, Mrs. Jewel Sundquist, Don Lind, Mayor Fred L. Peterson and Fire Commissioner Stanley W. Earl. The final contribution was \$3,791.00. The station wagon was to be purchased from a local car dealer, and the demonstration resuscitator temporarily located at the St. Johns Fire Station would be purchased for use in the first aid station wagon.



Finally, dedication ceremonies for the Shirlee Ann emergency car were held on a Saturday afternoon, January 28, in the new St. Johns Fire station on N. Alta Street. At 6:30 PM following the ceremony, the first aid station wagon climbed Germantown Road to Skyline Legion Hall with siren sounding and blinker light flashing, a very effective picture in the icy snow storm. Citizens viewed the equipment and complimented fireman Glen Whalon for his efficiency in demonstrating first aid equipment.

In the following years one major purchase (and the first such equipment in the City) was the Hurst tool, "Jaws of Life", designed to cut through a car's metal, allowing rescuers to reach accident victims more quickly. Equipment purchases made through the Shirlee Ann Trust Fund have included dive-rescue equipment, advance medical equipment, a medical reference library, and most recently, the "high angle rope rescue equipment" first used in August 1993 to bring up the driver of a car who had gone over the steep N. Willamette Boulevard embankment.

After the first vehicle was put into service so long ago, the open Shirlee Ann Trust Fund continued to receive community support ear-marked for equipment not in the City's budget. People have contributed over the years as memorials to loved ones, in lieu of flowers, as have many appreciative people who have been helped by the paramedics.

The "Shirlee Ann" has become an integral part of the community with an almost possessive attitude evidenced by anyone who has been involved in an emergency in the area to which the "Shirlee Ann" responded. With a response time of less than four minutes, the "Shirlee Ann" is faster than the normal ambulance response time.

Station Company 22 and the "Shirlee Ann" now cover a large service area on the North Portland Peninsula: St. Johns, the Linnton community, the Rivergate Industrial Complex, Burlington, and the West Hills area. Because of the geographical location of these communities and industrial areas, having the "Shirlee Ann" based in St. Johns has allowed for a very low response time on emergency calls.

For local residents it is reassuring to know that in the 1950's the City of Portland held a ceremony at City Hall and put into their permanent records a promise that they would man and maintain the "Shirlee Ann".

Resource: St. Johns Review  
January 20, 1955 to January 25, 1956  
Research By: Joan and Austin Brown  
Compiled By: Barbara R. Parmelee





**MR. DANIEL S. DUFF AND THE ST. JOHNS POST OFFICE**  
**By Mary M. Keever**

One of St. Johns pioneer's was Daniel S. Duff, the first Superintendent of the new St. Johns Post Office located at N. Ivanhoe Street. He remained in this capacity until his retirement from the postal service. Being very fond of children, Mr. Duff would let young mothers bring their little ones to be weighed on the postal scales because of its accuracy.

Mr. Duff always had a friendly hello for everyone and if he didn't know a name, the person would have no way of knowing this. To get out of a situation of this kind he'd innocently ask, "Do you spell your name with an "a" or "e?" If the name happened to be Brown without either - well, it could still have ended with an e!"

A standing joke about this main office concerned Mr. Duff selling some postage stamps to a little old lady. She took them but, later returned to his window and asked him to put them on her package. He licked the stamps and placed them firmly in the proper spot. She was delighted and said, "Thank you so much, Mr. Postmaster. That just goes to show what experience does - I licked those stamps three times and couldn't make them stick!"



Information in article below was obtained from various government and daily papers in 1933.

**NEW POST OFFICE OPENS, MODERN ST. JOHNS BUILDING  
NOW IN USE, ATTRACTIVE CONCRETE STRUCTURE ERECTED  
AT COST OF \$49,000.00; FINE FACILITIES OFFERED**

*Mail service for residents of the St. Johns district will now be handled from a new concrete building adorning Ivanhoe Street between Alta and Baltimore. The new office was opened yesterday. The improvement brings the St. Johns Post Office from a rented building on North Jersey Street to a spacious and well-lighted structure acclaimed by Government Inspector Newman as one of the finest of its kind.*

*As originally planned, the building was to cost \$65,000.00 but economy brought that figure down to \$49,000.00-the actual sum spent on its construction. Granite steps lead into a large lobby with walls of Tennessee marble and a floor of attractive tile. The workroom floor is concrete covered with block maple. An abundance of window space permits plenty of light. Mr. D. S. Duff will have one clerk and seven carriers. Postmaster Duff is well pleased with, the structure and commends A. T. Schenck, Government Construction Engineer Marion Stokes, Portland architect, and the Anderson Construction Company for their combined efforts.*

*The front of the building (white brick) carries the large lettering "U. S. Post Office" and the big eagle flies nearby. The mezzanine, the basement and the main floor comprise the sections of the structure. On the mezzanine are the inspectors lookout station and the swing room for employees. Showers have been built into the swing room for carriers.*



*Two murals were painted on the walls of the outer lobby of the St. Johns Post Office. One is a historical panel and the second is contemporary picturing Dan S. Duff, Superintendent of St. Johns Postal Station, and the late Mr. Curran, President of the Businessmen's Club of St. Johns. The artist was John Ballator, Portland, Oregon.*

After his retirement, Mr. Duff spent time traveling with his wife, between his home in Portland and his place in Gearhart, and visited among his six children, all of whom resided in Portland. He died May 31, 1954.

"St. Johns" Mr. Duff would say, like he was caressing it. He loved the place.



### SAID MR. DUFF, OUR GENIAL POSTMASTER

By Percy T. Freeman in 1933

"Said Mr. Duff, our genial postmaster  
as I chanced to pass his way,  
I hope the people of St. Johns  
will come to see my grand display..

It is in the post-office lobby  
That I will act as host,  
Will be there to tell you all  
About the merits of parcel post..

You may send a package COD  
Up to seventy pounds in weight,  
Can send it with the greatest speed  
For 'twill never go by freight..

Old Uncle Sam knows his stuff  
When it comes to deliverin' mail,  
For he is always on the job  
And in his duty will never fail..

Now folks, I wish you'd visit me  
And let me explain some thing to you,  
Things I believe you do not know  
About what parcel post can do."





**THE UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND (The Notre Dame of the West)**  
**By Mrs. Howard F. Keever**

Four men, through a fascinating intermingling of coincidence, adventure, and vision, paved the way for the University of Portland. Captain William Clark, the explorer, discovered the place. Archbishop Francis N. Blanchet, the missionary, prepared it. Father Basil Anthony Moreau, the founder of a religious teaching order, developed the educational principles. Archbishop Alexander Christie, the practical-minded prelate, ceremoniously united the two...place and purpose.

The University is situated above the Willamette River, a peaceful river which meanders its way northward along the slopes of the Cascade Mountain range through a rich agricultural valley until it reaches the city of Portland. Here the mighty Willamette enters the Columbia which originates amid Canadian glaciers and plunges southward, gathering momentum from various tributaries until it turns west and rushes through a deep gorge out to the Pacific Ocean.

From the ninety two acre campus perched high on the bluff, the scenic skyscape of downtown Portland is visible approximately five miles to the southwest. Directly beneath the campus are Swan Island and Mock's Bottom with their brisk economy of manufacturing and commercial concerns. So much can be said for the University. It is a point of pride for all who attend it and for the whole State of Oregon.

The University completed its seventy-fifth year of operation in 1976 and preparations for the Diamond Jubilee promoted the University Community to recall with considerable pride the historical evolution of the institution, its battle to survive and mature, its courage to become educationally distinctive and its determination to achieve academic and professional recognition. The impressive advance of the University of Portland over those seven and a half decades, celebrated in 1976, was the result of an agreeable blend of farsighted leadership on the part of a few and abiding dedication on the part of many.

Since 1976 the University of Portland has been awarded a terrific sum of money to erect and maintain a sports arena called "The Earl Chiles Center". The money came from an inheritance of the Estate of the late Fred Meyer, owner and operator of a vast chain of supermarkets throughout Oregon and Washington.

Later in 1987 a most beautiful and much larger Chapel dedicated "Christ The Teacher" was completed on the campus. A new pipe organ was installed at the same time. A covered tennis court completes the picture gracing the campus. Plans were then in order to begin the building of the only independently-owned Catholic Radio Station in the nation.

The University is run by the Holy Cross Fathers, the same Order that operate the University of Notre Dame in the Midwest. Father E. P. Murphy was the first President of the University of Portland.

In the 1996 Olympics, gold medal winners in Women's Soccer competition for the USA were Tiffeny Milbrett and Shannon MacMillan, students of the University of Portland. These are the first Olympic medal holders from the University.



**STATION KBVM-FM**  
**By Mrs. Howard F. Keever**

On February 28th, 1989 at 1:00 PM ground was broken at the University of Portland for the first independently owned Catholic radio station in the nation-Station KBVM-in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ. It officially started broadcasting on December 9, 1989.

Bishop Paul Waldschmidt one of the auxiliary Bishops in Portland was Master of Ceremonies. He blessed the ground and turned the first shovel full of dirt at the ceremony. Mr. and Mrs. Nick Mariana, President and Secretary of Metro Broadcasting Company turned over the second shovel. In the same vein the ceremony continued for the present Archbishop William Levada and his auxiliary Bishop Kenneth Steiner. The deceased Archbishops Christy, Dwyer and Howard were also remembered.

Several other dignitaries that were similarly honored were the former head of the Rosary Club, President Father Agius of the Order of Preachers of St. Dominic, (OP), and Father Dufner (OP) who succeeded him.

I extend a note of sincere appreciation to James Covert, a professor of history at the University of Portland. He permitted me to use historical facts from his book, "A Point Of Pride: The University Of Portland Story".

This story was written in 1988 for the St. Johns Heritage Book and edited by Donald Ball.

Information of the exact year and broadcast date of the radio station KBVM was from the radio station at the University, researched by Don Ball.

Detail about the Olympic Gold Medal Winners was given by Joe Etzel, U Of P, Athletic Director contacted by Don Ball.



FANAKIS GROCERY. 1928 STAR-DURANT ROADSTER. "GUS" FANAKIS, HELEN MILES, MIKE AND MAURICE FINN. HOUSE IN BACKGROUND IS THE GATTON HOUSE. OSCAR AND MERTA GATTON MASON LIVED THERE.

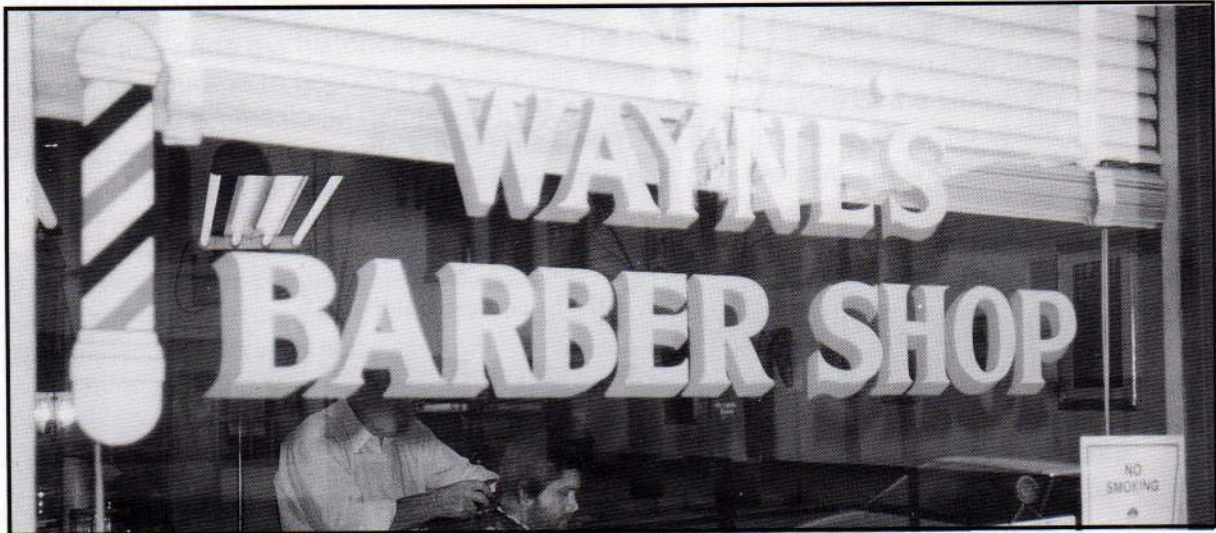


## WAYNE'S BARBER SHOP By Velma Franske Smith 1994

Wayne E. Smith was born July 10, 1921 in Jefferson, Oregon. He joined the service August 12, 1942 at the Portland, Oregon Navy Recruiting Station. He trained at the Navy Training Station in San Diego, California and was then assigned to the USS California in Bremerton, Washington. He was Ship's Service Man B 2C(T) USNR V-6, Officer's barber. One day he was called to the bridge to give the captain a haircut. When he got there he discovered he had forgotten his clippers. The captain was nice about it anyway.

Battles he participated in were Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Leyte, Surigao Straits (where she dealt fatal blows to an enemy battle ship), Lingayan Gulf and Okinawa. His medals are: World War II Victory Medal, Philippine Liberation Medal 2 stars, American Area Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal 4 stars. He was discharged December 16, 1945. He started working in St. Johns in 1946. He took the place of another barber who went on vacation and didn't come back.

Wayne bought the shop from the owner, Bob Sundstrom, after working there a year. It was Central Barber Shop at 8723 N. Jersey and Wayne renamed it Wayne's Barber Shop. He moved to 8713 N. Jersey where Roy Crouchley had built a barber shop and shoe repair shop in the space which was the alley next to a shoe repair shop which had been damaged by fire.



WAYNE'S BARBER SHOP - Courtesy of the Smith Family

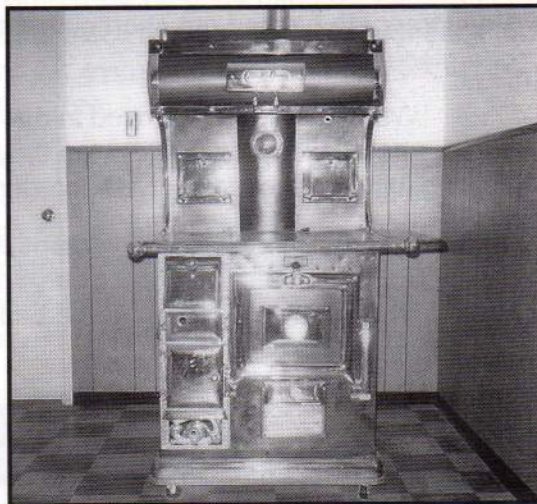
In 1947 he married Velma Franske. Velma was born in St. Johns. They have three children, Robin, Debra and Terry. Debra is married to Dan Newport and they have two children, Reuben and Rachel. They live in Petersburg, Alaska. Robin, Debra, Terry and Dan are former students of Roosevelt High School.



In 1987 at age 65 Wayne started working half days. In 1990 a lady came in the shop and said she was looking for an old barber shop to use in a Nikon camera ad. Wayne showed her his antique barber chair. They came back the next Monday and worked all day. Wayne was paid \$300.00. They used an older man in the ad (Carl King) who works as a model. Not long afterwards he was on David Letterman's show showing some of his inventions. The ad and picture were in the December 1991 issue of Life, National Geographic, Outdoor Life, Esquire and other magazines.

In the shop is an old wood cook stove that Wayne bought from an ad in the paper. The stove was originally purchased from a California furniture store. The stove was made in St. Johns in the early 1900's. The factory was located at the bottom of Richmond Avenue. St. Johns, Oregon was printed on the front of the stove.

Some of Wayne's customers have been coming for hair cuts since he first started, also their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.



STOVE MANUFACTURED BY ST. JOHNS STOVE WORKS LOCATED AT THE FOOT OF RICHMOND  
Source - Smith Family



WAYNE SMITH CUTTING HAIR USING HIS ANTIQUE BARBER CHAIR - Courtesy of the Smith Family



## TRAVEL! ST. JOHNS STYLE (IN DAYS OF YORE)

By Helen Miles

Before the coming of man on the Peninsula, wild animals made paths through the area. The easy way was for men to follow these paths.

Humans camped along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers and the Slough. Early trappers hacked out short cuts with their steel axes, making it easier to get from one place to another.

When the settlers arrived in the 1840's, things changed dramatically - for they had teams of oxen and horses - so they widened the road by cutting the trees and making, when necessary, crude "corduroy" roads of logs.

Freight was carried by wagons and riverboats. For instance, my grandfather, Henry Gagen, during the 1880's barged pianos from Portland to St. Johns and surrounding areas. Because of the bad roads, it was easier to use the rivers to barge the heavy freight.

Roads at this time were still very primitive, dusty in summer but when it rained in the fall and winter, they were muddy and had steep chuckholes. Up on the hills in the new town, people prospered. Some bought automobiles. They couldn't drive very far before running out of pavement and hitting gravel or dirt roads. There were still many wagons and sometimes you would see a buggy or a one-horse shay. Occasionally there would be a bicycle, used mostly by a local resident to ride to work.

In the 1920's, I remember a few trucks such as Model French Bakery (owned and driven by Gus Delistraty and George Filip), Carnation Milk and Lang Brothers General Grocery trucks. I remember Mr. Budnick's fish wagon. He delivered on Fridays. On order he'd deliver fresh shell fish and squid (calamari).

In the late 1920's my father Mike had a Star-Durant roadster. Sometimes while riding with him, I'd pretend to be driving. One day he asked me if I wanted to drive. I was thirteen years old. This was before we needed learning permits. My father got out of the car. I drove down Willamette Boulevard. When I tried to turn around to go back, the engine went dead. I left the car crossways to the road and walked all the way back to my father who was waiting several blocks away. You can see that we didn't have much traffic!

My next jaunt driving alone was down Burgard Street to Terminal 4. Every place down there was open. I'd just drive out onto the docks and practice different maneuvers. It's a wonder I didn't drive off the docks into the Willamette River. This was all before Rivergate and the Kaiser Shipyards. My father-in-law George F. lived on the farm at the end of Willamette Boulevard. He drove his wagons and horses to Mock's Crest to help dig the streets for development. I now live on one of those streets. Years later, his son (my husband) George W. (Bill) used to pilot planes out of Swan Island. How things have changed.

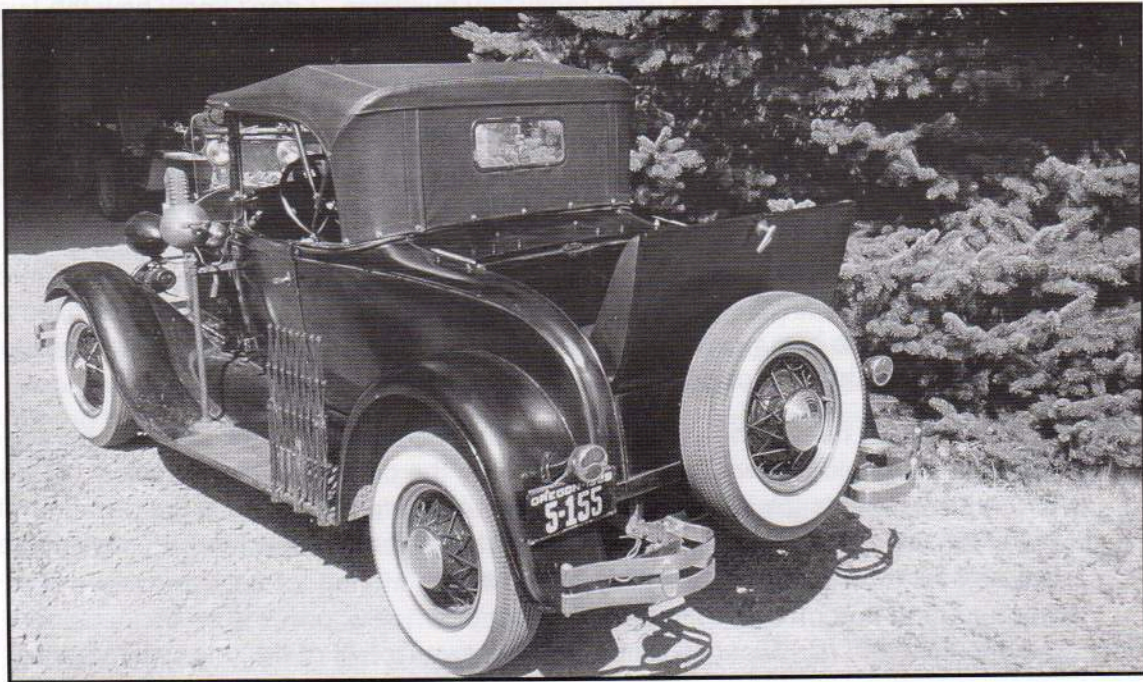


## THE RUMBLE SEAT By Florence Denton Evans

In the early thirties my sister's boyfriend (soon to be my brother-in-law) owned an old Chevy with a rumble seat. I and my boyfriend (soon to be my husband) rode in the rumble seat. One day we came out of the folk's house and before we could get into the rumble seat they hopped into the car and so intent were they on their own conversation they drove off and left us standing on the curb. It was a good thing we weren't in the process of climbing in. They drove around the block and sheepishly came back for us. We enjoyed many picnics and outings in the car even when my sis and I sat on the curb and waited for the boys to patch and change a tire.

We enjoyed driving up and down Denver Avenue over the rolling bumps at the side of the road. It gave us a roller coaster sensation. It was fun to sit in the sun and feel the wind in your hair. However it wasn't so much fun getting caught out in a rain storm. This we did one night when we went to a Grange dance out in the country. Even a big tarp couldn't keep us dry and we were like a couple of drowned rats. This didn't dampen our enthusiasm for the rumble seat. It is too bad that there isn't something as much fun for the modern generation.

For those too young to remember the rumble seat I submit Webster's Dictionary definition - Rumble seat: an open seat in the rear, behind the roofed seat, which could be folded shut when not in use.



1929 MODEL A FORD RUMBLE SEAT ROADSTER  
Photo Courtesy Of Louis Stone



side and telephone booth were obstructing the view of the building and plans to remove them were being made. Mayor Terry Shrunck and the Portland City Council supported the second phase of the program. This included cleaning the brick and pillars, repainting the exterior trim and landscaping the area. It was learned from Portland City Officials that due to a lack of funds only minor repairs had ever been made to the 1907 structure. The estimate cost of the project was about \$5,000. The project was undertaken by the St. Johns Boosters who were counting on donations of labor, plants and trees.

In 1978 the police moved to temporary quarters at the Portland Air Base. The building was deemed inadequate for police needs and had to be brought up to building code standards. The old City Hall had been designated a historical building so the outside remained basically the same. The interior was completely changed and provided the police with new interior space, a new telephone system and surveillance cameras. Also a new elevator was installed. The renovation was completed with \$300,000 in Economic Development funds and \$109,000 in State Revenue Sharing bonds. The police use the main floor and basement. The top floor room is used by the community in conjunction with the St. Johns Heritage Association museum. The police use this room for roll call and special training.

At this writing the police are again in temporary quarters, this time at Assumption School while another renovation takes place. Our Heritage Association is gathering at the St. Johns "Y" where they are graciously allowing us use of a meeting room. For this we are very thankful. We are looking forward to getting our materials and artifacts out of storage and back into the remodeled building. It is our hope to have the Museum open to the public twice weekly in the newly renovated City Hall.



VELMA SMITH & RUSSIAN SAILOR FRIEND AT FIREMEN'S POOL IN 1943

From Velma Smith's Collection



## I REMEMBER THE PATCHED TIRES & THE OLD MODEL T

By Norma Lind Regan

The most singular thing I remember about car rides in the 1930's was the short time it took for a tire to go flat. I can still see Dad get his repair kit out, take part of an old inner tube or prepared patch, open the strong smelling adhesive and patching the inner tube, then pumping air into it. The inner tube then had to be forced into the tire itself. We would just be going along great when another tire needed fixing. This delay gave us kids a chance to scour the land around the car. There was lots to see and appreciate in those days. No super highways but roads past farms, open lands, small towns and the fun Burma Shave signs. We tried to remember them all. Some we didn't really understand but we enjoyed them anyhow.

I remember going up to the Oregon Caves in my Uncle Raymond's car and riding in the back rumble seat. The road was very curvy and I got very sick to my stomach. I still don't know if it was the curves or the smell of the car's exhaust. Wherever we would go we would see cars parked alongside the road and someone patching tires. We were lucky in that any blowout tire we had did not harm us in any way.

Trips to the Oregon Coast took quite a long time, but we filled our time with singing songs such as "She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain When She Comes," "When It's Springtime In The Rockies", "Come Josephine In My flying Machine", "How're You Going To Keep Them Down On The Farm After They've See Paree?" and other favorites. Cabins at the coast were really tiny buildings. I don't know how the five of us fitted in them, but we did. Not everyone had cars in the 1930's and we always felt very fortunate to be able to have one and take the trips that we did, patched tires or not.

We and half the neighbor kids were riding with my mom, Mandy Lind, in an old Model T. We had been to the Vaughn Street Ball Park for the opening Beaver's game and were on our way home. Mom tried to get the car up the ramp to the St. Johns Bridge but it didn't feel as if it would make it. We leaned forward to try and help it up the ramp. Somehow we made it up the ramp, across the bridge, to our house. There were no seat belts or restrictions to how many people could be in one car so we piled as many as possible in our cars. Mom would drive the bunch of us to Grant High Bowl for us to enter the Junior Rose Parade.

The last ride we had in the old Model T was coming back from the parade and being hit in the side as we crossed Ivanhoe by the old Post Office. Luckily we weren't hurt but we lost the ice cream we were given as prizes for being in the parade. The loss of the ice cream was the most traumatic part of that ride. The Model T was parked in the yard and was never used by our family again.





## ARVITSEN'S ORCHARD By V. J. "Skee" Larsen

The Arvitsens, friends of ours, lived in a house on the northeast corner of Charleston and Decatur, a block comprising about an acre of ground. A small house (today in 1955) stands to mark the location of the old house, the last remaining link to remind me of a much lovelier home site in earlier days. The pioneer Scott Waterworks lay just across the street to the east.

The northwest portion of the tract was fenced to take care of a combined chicken yard and orchard, a little larger than a 50x100 foot lot. This part sloped gently towards the river, contained about a dozen young fruit trees, all large enough to bear fruit such as apples, plums and cherries. A meshed wire fence enclosed this yard as well as the orchard, the wire high enough so the fowl could not escape by flying away.

John the eldest son, a well built lad about twelve years of age, and I were in the orchard sampling the plums and apples. This was around the first week in August of 1905.

While the sampling continued we were reminded a number of times to get out of the orchard and to leave the fruit alone. These instructions came from Mother Arvitsen, then in her thirties, from the porch of the house. The tone of these pleadings continue to rise, however we paid little heed until she left the house to come on the run to the door of the chicken house. Within a few seconds she had grabbed a stout stick, about 4 feet long, from somewhere, then burst through the door which spilled the chickens into the enclosure, and bore down on us with surprising agility. We were close to the middle of the arena, John up in a tree perched on a limb, I on the ground. Quicker than a flash John tumbled to the ground, equally as swift sized the dangerous situation, then chose to run for his life.

We started down the slope with as mad and irate female as I ever saw in full pursuit waving that 4 foot war-club as she spouted her fury in Swedish, every word of which was understood by me.

To clear the way, as well as in self defense, I quickly retreated backwards to the fence, there to remain and watch in horror as John turned to race around and up the slope seeking a way out or evade certain doom. There was no escape there, so he turned to circle back down the yard all the while fairly well holding some of his original head start.

The circle seemed to narrow a bit as they flew around the enclosure with the pursuer cutting corners and slowly but surely closing the gap. Whether Mother Arvitsen had ever competed for honors on the Swedish Olympic track team I never learned, but handicapped as she was with her long skirt and petticoat, common at the turn of the century, long enough to almost sweep the ground, especially at the back of the garment, her fleetness would have done justice to an Olympic sprinter or champion. The smooth and rapid rhythm of her limbs set those long dresses to flapping so as to churn the warm air of that summer's afternoon; the rustle of which also must have stricken fear into her son as he frantically raced around and around.



At the end of what could have been the fifth lap she drew close enough to raise the stick and whack it full upon his head. The blow would have felled an ox. The shriek he let loose echoed over and beyond the western hills, his knees buckled, but not for long, he seemed to know that this was just a sample of more to follow, which caused him to redouble efforts, if that was possible, as the race continued with a desperate, frantic action that belonged to a "winner-take-all-contest".

A few more laps brought his pursuer close enough to enable her to rain more of those appalling blows, all of which landed on the head or shoulders of John. The struggle ended with the son literally beaten to the ground, there to grovel and beg for mercy. I noted the fury which had almost consumed her quickly turn to pity as she surveyed the scene the physical threshing caused, but not the lecturing. She continued this, then seeing me more or less petrified over at the fence, started toward me with that awful weapon grasped in her hands. Evidently remembering the fine friendship existing between my mother and her, reason must have returned while she closed the 40 foot gap between us, then she veered slightly to the left to continue to the chicken house all the while repeating the instructions given some minutes earlier from the porch of the house.

A pioneer story, with or without a moral, especially one flavored with a bit of Swedish should end well. This is no exception. John recovered to become the "apple or plum" of his mothers eye, and I never again entered the Arvitsen orchard.



OLD ST. JOHNS, OREGON - NOTE BOARDWALK - Source Laura Norene Minkler



## CELIA'S STORY A DESPERATE FIGHT FOR A ST. JOHNS BRIDGE

By Celia Burley For The St. Johns Review May 7, 1992

Just before the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the St. Johns Bridge, Celia, who was chosen 'Citizen of Year' decided to tell about her first-hand memories of the struggle, work, and sacrifices, made by a long-forgotten group of people who really were spearheads and played a big part in getting the St. Johns Bridge.

Mr. Ed Doyle, Ted Whalen, Bill Burley, (my dad), and Harry Fassett came up with an idea that they believed would get the people out to vote for a bridge in St. Johns. But, you HAD TO GET OUT AND TELL THEM.

Sixty years ago or more, St. Johns was to most voters from other city districts, a place way out at the end of nowhere! Why would we need a bridge?

The idea was to form a caravan of as many cars and people from St. Johns as possible and travel to every grange, school, and meeting place in Multnomah County through the six months before the election. A free show was advertised and during the show, speakers would tell the people of the need for a bridge, and plead for their votes. The show consisted of my dad and Harry Fassett and their old vaudeville act (they did Abbott and Costello-type gags long before Abbott and Costello), a fellow named Cecil Parker who dressed in an orange satin Egyptian suit and sang, "The Kashmir Song", a fire eater who wore a big Indian blanket and feathers (he wowed the audiences), Edith Gertz, who played a great marimbafone, and my sisters and me who sang and danced everything from the Scottish Highland Fling to the "Old Soft Shoe." During those months, I don't believe there was a school, grange, lodge hall, or church in Multnomah County that our free show and speakers didn't play.

We had large card advertising signs with pictures of the performers, and even then, sometimes the audience wasn't aware there would be political speakers on the program also, but they would patiently sit through it all. Yes, we had plenty of politicians who would jump on the caravans to tell the people why they should be elected to their respective offices. Afterwards, there was much handshaking and many promises. I remember Mr. Lepper and Mr. Johnson, and a lady name Dorothy McCullough Lee giving their political speeches.

Sometimes we had an audience of ten, sometimes a hundred or more. When there was an early meeting somewhere, the caravan entertainers would take off work early to be there. My sisters and I were in school then, and we loved getting out of school early for the shows. We'd take our homework and do it during the speeches. We knew the speeches by memory after awhile. (Later, Mrs. Lee became Mayor of Portland).

My dad wrote a song about our need for the bridge. It went to the tune of "Sidewalks of New York". He plunked it out on his old Blinkendorf typewriter. I still have the original typewritten paper. Here it is:

Verse: Portland is a lovely place, and that you will agree,  
We have some wonderful bridges, they're as fine as they can be.



But the town is all lopsided, here's the way the bridges run  
There's 7 south of Broadway, while in the north we haven't one!

Chorus: They go from east side to west side, all in the south of town,  
While St. Johns, her one best suburb, in a ferry boat goes round,  
We've been patient and that you will allow,  
But we're fed up with that ferry, and we want a bridge right now.

Verse: Our side is the best side in dear old Portland town.  
We produce the payroll, in your book just mark that down.  
All we want is a fair deal, and when the voting is done.  
We'll walk across the St. Johns bridge in Nineteen thirty-one!

We would get the audiences singing the song with us, and it was really fun. Mr. Doyle usually gave the speech about the need for a bridge, but there were others, too, who spoke of this need. I wish I could remember all their names--those faithful St. Johns people who traveled in that twenty and thirty car caravan several nights a week. As the election time drew near, it was even more often. Here are only a few I do remember. Grit and Mandy Lind's little old Ford and driver (always available to anyone who needed a ride) Charles McGill from the hardware store, The Curriers, Earl Berry, Dr. Palmer, the Mucks from the grocery store, and Dr. Luzana Graves (my sister, Lu was named for her), and the wonderful men from the St. Johns Bachelor Club who were always on hand to drive and help in any way they could. These are only a few of the people who loved St. Johns so much and wanted the best for their community. They went out and worked hard to make that bridge a reality!

Sometimes after the show, Mr. Doyle would take my dad and Harry Fassett and my sisters and me for a treat at the old Hazelwood restaurant which was across the Broadway Bridge and toward what is now Lloyd Center. He would signal the waitress to bring the pastry cart to our table, and Mary and Lu and I were allowed to choose a goodie from the most gorgeous pastry I've ever seen. What a joy that was in our young lives.

The bridge measure had been voted down many times, and I truly believe that the election would never have swung our way had it not been for those wonderful people and their campaign to get out in person and tell the voters our need for a bridge.

I'm sure that when the big celebration began on June 15, 1991, they may have been forgotten but I know they were around the bridge in spirit. I can see them all smiling down and, oh, yes, when I think of the bridge I will always remember that wonderful pastry cart from the old Hazelwood!

What I have written down here is truly a love story about people who loved their community of St. Johns, who loved and cared about each other, and who became united in a big and important project. I wish all who use and enjoy **OUR BEAUTIFUL ST. JOHNS BRIDGE** could have known them all.

Revised and edited by Norma Lind Regan with Celia's permission.



## GROWING UP IN ST. JOHNS By Milton A. Rabin

As we all age, memories of that which actually occurred and that which we wished would have happened sometimes tend to blur into fact. That effect notwithstanding, this article is a reminiscence of my years growing up in St. Johns (1907 - 1935).

I was the second child of Jack and Sonia Rabin. I have an older sister, Beatrice, and a younger brother, Kenneth. My mother, who emigrated from Russia, left her dental practice to come to Portland, where she met my father, who had moved here from London, England. No one remembers the dates and reasons they left their former homes. Sadly, no one realized the importance that those dates and reasons would assume in later years.

The most memorable incident from my youth in St. Johns lies with the Williams School Fire in approximately 1929 - I was in the third grade, I believe. That fire could have been devastating to many. Fortunately the recess period had moved most everyone outside, so no one was hurt. The timing was particularly fortuitous inasmuch as the outside fire escape steps were covered with ice and snow. I remember that someone was ringing the hand held fire bell to get everyone out of the building.

As the fire burned, we stood behind the auto showroom window across the street from the school to avoid the heat, watching for anxious parents who were searching for their children. My mother, for example, put my little brother on a sled my father had built and raced to the school to look for me. My father and others closed their places of business and rushed to the fire.

Once parents were sure that their children were all right, some entered the burning school building and began throwing personal possessions out of the windows; shortly thereafter the fire department told them to get out. After the fire, the Williams School students moved to the present James John School, which was at that time still under construction.

Another memorable incident was another school fire; the burning of the James John (Junior) High which I believe occurred shortly after the St. Johns Bridge was built in 1931. The school was empty at the time because all of the students had already moved to Roosevelt High School. People believed that there were squatters living in the building who may have been responsible for starting the fire.

My sister Beatrice, who had entered Roosevelt High School prior to the fires, was selected for a Rose Festival Princess, but she suffered so badly from hay fever and asthma, she was unable to be near the floats with so many flowers. This ended her possible entry into the realm of Rosaria. My ever present younger brother Kenneth made his career with the Diplomatic Service.

St. Johns was an active community with the attitude that "boys will be boys". As a result, my friends and I took advantage of the attitude and played a number of pranks on the community. For example, a small church on the corner of Chicago and Central was surprised to find the Pastor's small, heavy Austin car precariously placed on his front porch. It took eight to ten determined kids to do it.



The St. Johns Police Station (that today houses the St. Johns Heritage Association and museum) with its miniature train was a hangout for meeting kids. It was there that I met my friend of over 65 years - Paul Sloan.

Paul's mother managed the McChesney Hotel. Paul and I used the empty stores under the apartments to load a tire pump with water and soak the unfortunate pedestrians until we got caught. Paul's mother was kind enough to let us use one of the hotel's empty garages as a clubhouse. We needed lights badly, and the gentleman who garaged his car next to our clubhouse could never figure out why his battery was dead every morning.

Paul and I ran our own telephone lines from his home to mine-about three blocks-courtesy of the public telephone poles. I think we used two cans and a wet string. Believe it or not, we are both ham operators today.

My father had a clothing store on Jersey Street, next to the original old theater. Tom Witty, whose father had a drug store on Jersey Street, is today our backyard neighbor. Alfred Kasmeyer's father had the variety store. He, I, and Betty Phillips, as well as many others, played for the school orchestra, traveling to other schools to perform.

Prior to the building of the St. Johns bridge in 1931 we crossed the river by ferry. My father who hated driving, managed to go off the road on the way to the ferry, both coming and going. In 1935 when I was all of fourteen years old he managed to get me a driver's license and never drove again.

A (former) post office was built in St. Johns. Postmaster Farley came for its dedication. Names and letters written by St. Johns Businessmen and others went into the cornerstone. My father told me to leave town if they ever opened it. I think he said all should have such things as federally funded financial security and national health insurance.

Things got pretty bad after the crash; we lost all and moved from St. Johns in 1935, opening a small restaurant near Benson High School. My father passed away in 1939 and the world changed. Soon after, World War II brought even more change to most of our lives. My brother Kenneth entered the Air Force and I entered the Navy. For better or worse, our lives in St. Johns were left far behind.





## LIFE AS IT WAS IN ST. JOHNS THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS OF MY LIFE

By June Armstrong Cusic

I was born in St. Johns, June 2, 1919 at my Grandmother's (Loretta Armstrong) home, at 528 E. Mohawk Street. The attending doctor was Dr. Luzanna Graves who remained a friend until she passed away in New Berry Park, California at the age of 94. She was laid to rest in Columbian Cemetery. When I was six weeks of age my parents, Nellie and Dick Armstrong, purchased a house on the corner of Richmond and Central. Two years later my father rebuilt it into a nice home.

I was enrolled in Kindergarten at Williams School where my teacher was Miss Casebeer. The school was located on Jersey Street between Charleston and John Street. That school burned January 13, 1929. However, the new brick school with a new name, The James John Grade School with grades 1 - 8 was finished and ready to start operation so we started school in it. It used the Platoon System, new to all of us, but a very excellent way to teach. The Home Room teachers taught reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling and geography and other subjects were in separate rooms. Clara Nelson taught "Nature Study", Mrs. Ruth Simmons took care of the Auditorium, Eva Clark taught Art, Miss Overstreet had the Library, Miss Hodap had Gym, Miss McDonald taught Music, Miss West had Sewing and Cooking classes. Some of the Home Room teachers I remember were Miss Segal, Miss Katherine James, Mrs. Clifford. Substitute teachers were called when necessary, some of the same ones we learned to know well.

Having lived the first sixteen years of my life at the same address, then moving across the street to a house my parents owned also, I spent the rest of my St. John days there, a period of four years.

There was a big house on the corner of Richmond and Central that was originally the Noce home then later on became a four apartment building. It had many renters and some remained friends. Our neighbors otherwise were property owners and lived there many years. These were old St. John families. To name a few were: the Matt Swans, Foss Family, Gooler Family, Van Santens, Smalls, Redmonds, Erringers, Nibblers, Bells, Simpsons, Bridenbecks, Napoleons, Ross & Rose Walker, Towers (Jewelers), Currins (Drugstore), Hollenbachs, Powells, Basies, Boothbys, Fravels, Peters, Brooks, Johnsons (Painter), the Andy Kerrs, the BeLieux, Ila, and Perry (a policeman). All lived within a block or two of our home and all owned their homes and lived there for years. Their children grew up together and went to Grade School together. For High School they branched out. These were the folks who did business in the heart of St. Johns with the same people. The Deerings (Ice Cream & Candy), the Forsythes for groceries, H. F. Clark Furniture Store, the St. Johns Hardware, Currins For Drugs, the local doctors and dentists, the B & C (Bloomenthal & Caplan) Department Store, and Bonham & Curriers. They all had accounts with the U.S. National Bank. St. Johns thrived.

Problems were few - nothing that officers Mr. Roberts or Perry BeLieu couldn't handle nicely. For in those days parents taught their children to obey laws and rules, to respect each other and other's property. Life was good.

When the St. Johns Bridge was built in 1931 it was the highlight of everyone's life. To see it was a daily must. It was the largest, most important thing to happen to St. Johns. It was needed to replace the ferry at the foot of Pittsburg because traffic



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Prior to the building of the St. Johns bridge in 1931 we crossed the river by ferry. My father who hated driving, managed to go off the road on the way to the ferry, both coming and going. In 1935 when I was all of fourteen years old he managed to get me a driver's license and never drove again.

A (former) post office was built in St. Johns. Postmaster Farley came for its dedication. Names and letters written by St. Johns Businessmen and others went into the cornerstone. My father told me to leave town if they ever opened it. I think he said all should have such things as federally funded financial security and national health insurance.

Things got pretty bad after the crash; we lost all and moved from St. Johns in 1935, opening a small restaurant near Benson High School. My father passed away in 1939 and the world changed. Soon after, World War II brought even more change to most of our lives. My brother Kenneth entered the Air Force and I entered the Navy. For better or worse, our lives in St. Johns were left far behind.





because of the stick-to-it attitude of the men involved. There were many strikes in all ports of the United States.

Life after 1934 in St. Johns remained somewhat the same. Nothing too demonstrative happened. Street carfare for high schoolers traveling across town to school using tickets at 4 cents each in a book was reasonable. The street cars, single or tandem carried us across town in all directions. At the one end of the Interstate Bridge you could make connections to Hayden Island. To arrive there it traveled across the Columbia Slough on a high trestle above water, one could look down and see nothing but water - real scary. That, too, was the way to go to Jantzen Beach Amusement Park. It was very popular for many years. Later on Midget Car Races were drawing crowds. They were held on a race track west of the park.

A memorable event occurred during that time when a young whale took a wrong turn and swam up the Columbia River. It got sidetracked into the Columbia Slough and there it stopped. No doubt it was bewildered. It became top priority for everyone to see. Traffic was at a standstill all daylight hours. Folks parked and walked to the site. A man in a boat shot and killed the whale. It was hung in the City Hall for a short time until the odor became unbearable!

The twenties and thirties were both hard and good years, climbing out of a dreadful Depression and looking up toward better years. Everyone saw relief ahead, more jobs available and better wages. Families could now see "daylight" ahead - their children could stay in school, perhaps they could have a car, different varieties of food, and they could have a doctor if need be. Their way of life was on the upswing.

I was married May 26, 1940, the second wedding held in the new St. Johns YWCA building located on Charleston Street almost across the street from James John Grade School. I was leaving home and the area of many happy memories and also many friends and relatives. Having lived away from St. Johns for many years and now I am back picking up where I left off. I am seeing lots of changes and new faces and am enjoying every minute of it. This concludes the story of the first twenty years of my life in St. Johns.



MOTHER'S DAY MAY 12, 1929 - JUNE ARMSTRONG CUSIC'S 4B CLASS - WILLIAMS SCHOOL



**BOULEVARD GROCERY**  
**5436 N. Willamette Boulevard**

This is the story of Louis I. Schuman, Swiss emigrant, and his descendants as told by his granddaughter, Beverly Schuman Stone.

The first record of my grandfather's businesses was found in the Oregon Historical Society records of 1882 and before. He managed the Portland Fish Depot on Third and Pine and he resided at the Arrigoni House. Later in 1883 he managed the James Williams and Company. His residence was at the corner of Seventh and Ash. Sometime between 1884 and 1889 he bought a house at SW 15th between Mill and Montgomery. Between 1889 and 1903 Louis owned his own business, Louis L. Schuman Fish, Poultry and Game. The address was 28 Third Avenue.

Lyda Ernestine Schuman, the only child I can remember of Louis Schuman's first marriage, was born in August 1885. After the death of his first wife he married Lida Siegenthaler of Cedar Mills, also having been born in Switzerland. They lived with their two children, Myrtle Schuman, born in 1895, and Lester born in 1899 at a residence at 379 Chapman.

Between 1903 and 1905 my grandfather and his family settled on 836 Willamette Boulevard between Portsmouth Avenue and west to Van Houten Avenue. This was a rooming house with a grocery store at the ground level that was owned by Sam Siegenthaler (Grandma's brother). The ground breaking for a new house and store was started on the corner of Van Houten at the old address system of 848 and 850 N. Willamette Boulevard.

Only by records of the Oregon Historical Society do we find that the residence and new business were opened in 1908 or 1909. This was a family owned and operated business. That was all my father, Lester, knew since his father died when he was fifteen and he was unable to complete high school so he could help his mother run the business.

1921 was the year my parents married. My mother's maiden name was Elsie Mergens. Her family was in the grocery business, too, in SW Portland. The young couple took over the operation of the business and moved into the residence next door. My grandmother Lida moved back to the west side on Cable Street.

Donald, my brother was born in 1922 and became the handy grocery boy. In those days customers could call in orders and they would be delivered during slack time of the day.

My twin sister, Barbara and I learned at an early age that we could lend a helping hand too. During grade school days we always came home for lunch and while Mom was fixing lunch we would pile a few things in a basket on our bikes and head off to a neighbor's house. One time as I got off my bike the front wheel and handle bars turned and a dozen eggs dumped out landing on the sidewalk. What a mess! I took the lady of the house the remaining order and headed back to tell Dad what had happened. Being the kind man he was he made me feel better by saying "Accidents happen" and handed me another carton of eggs and something to clean up the mess. I headed back with the thought to be more careful.



## MEMORIES OF THE 1950's By Alice Freeman Weaver

I was born and raised in north Portland. Born in 1947 with childhood memories of the 1950's. My parents, Bill and Lillian Freeman, lived in what is now called "Columbia Villa", but when I was born they were called defense housing.

When I was about kindergarten age we moved to a house that my dad bought on Portsmouth Street, just up from Columbia Boulevard. We as kids had lots of open space there, and our property extended to what is the street behind Portsmouth. We had lots of trees - cherry, apple, plum, and pears. There was a lot of tall grass in between and we had paths running all through our property along with all the open space that was behind us.

There was a woman who lived on a little dirt road that was behind our property that we called the "Egg Lady" for she raised chickens and sold the eggs. I would always run down the path to her house with money my mother gave me to buy eggs from her. I remember she would always put the money in her sugar jar that she had in the cupboard.

Everyone seemed to have gardens during those times, and as kids during our playing we never ran home to eat, we just picked from anyone's garden and kept on playing.

During the summers we would get on our bikes and ride to Jantzen Beach which at that time was an amusement park. We would spend our days swimming and riding all the rides. My favorites were the Bumper Cars, Fun House, and the "Fat Lady". On hot summer nights we would always sleep outdoors in one of our many "forts" that we had built in the woods on our property, telling scary stories, and watching the stars until we finally drifted off to sleep.

St. Johns has changed a lot since then, I moved away in the 1960's, and lived in other states, but my memories of St. Johns have always been a part of me. It was a wonderful place to grow up in during that time.



BURLINGTON STREET - ST. JOHNS, OREGON (Taken From Old Post Card) - Laura Norene Minkler



## THE MACRUM, MEARS AND OLYMPIA STREETS GANG OF OLD EAST ST. JOHNS By Elsie NaSmythe Norris

The twenties was a time when children wore what their parents bought for them and how I hated my pair of high top button-shoes! Our mothers were at home, cooking, cleaning, sewing, tending gardens and taking care of their children. Most of us kids were well behaved - well, mostly. Very few mothers worked outside of the home. They attended PTA meetings and various clubs, and knew all the neighbors by name. There weren't many cars on the streets then and we had vacant lots on which to play. We had picnics at Columbia Park and Pier Park or just in the neighborhood. In the "East St. Johns" Plat of 1907, Mears Street was named for S.M. Mears, who was President of the Linnton Realty Company. Swift and Armour Streets were both named for the meat packers in North Portland. In 1910 Swift and Company purchased 150 acres on the Columbia Slough for a major packing plant. Powers Street was named for H. L. Powers who was president of the Oak Park Land Company which was developing real estate in St. Johns. Taft Street was named at a time when that name was much in the news. President Taft was elected in 1908. Macrum Street was named in the "Northern Hill" subdivision in 1893. I. A. Macrum was chairman of the Board of Railroad Commissioners. Midway Avenue was named in the "East St. John" subdivision. It was in the center of the plat. Astor Street was named for John Jacob Astor, a New York merchant whose agents established Astoria, Oregon in 1811. Columbia Boulevard comes originally from the ship in which Captain Gray was sailing when he discovered the Columbia River. I found no explanations for the names of Oregonian Avenue or Olympia Street. Oregonian Avenue could have been named after our state. Perhaps someone seeing Mt. Hood from Olympia Street was reminded of Mt. Olympus or a town named Olympia.

Our immediate group included the Carpenters - little Billye Maxine, Robert and Melbourne - or to us - Billy Max, Bobby and Buddy; my brother Bud (Perry NaSmythe); Annabelle and Johnny Rowekamp; Babe and Snooky Chandler - no one called them Evelyn and Rosalyn; Emma, Frankie and Conrad Heinrich; Mary and John Berry and others from old George School. Mary and I hoarded movie magazines and spent hours looking through them. We could walk to the St. Johns Theater and watch a movie, a news reel, a comedy and a serial episode for 10 cents. We could get a sackful of candy - or a candy bar - or a bottle of pop for a nickel. Someone played the organ and we kids ate and talked until the lights went out and pure entertainment took over. We were spellbound until the hero kissed the girl - behind an open umbrella, as the sun set in the west, and "The End" flashed across the screen. Who could ever forget "The Perils of Pauline", Harold Lloyd, and all those handsome heroes and beautiful leading ladies of the silent screen - and after that the talkies. In summer my mother took us to Five Mile Lake. My cousins Loleta Weston and Kenneth BeLieu often walked with us. Later an older boy, Chal Winkler watched over us younger kids. Our dog, Duke, was quite a help also. There was a raft with a diving board on it and when we dove under, Duke would bark and go down after us. As we got older, we could cross the tracks and swim in Three Corner Lake. It was deeper and steeper, without shallow places and had no beach area. We walked the tracks to attend the Annual Stock Show at what we called the "P.I. Building" located near Swift & Company. When the pool was built in Columbia Park we had a cleaner and safer place to swim. All too soon we were out of school and going our separate ways.



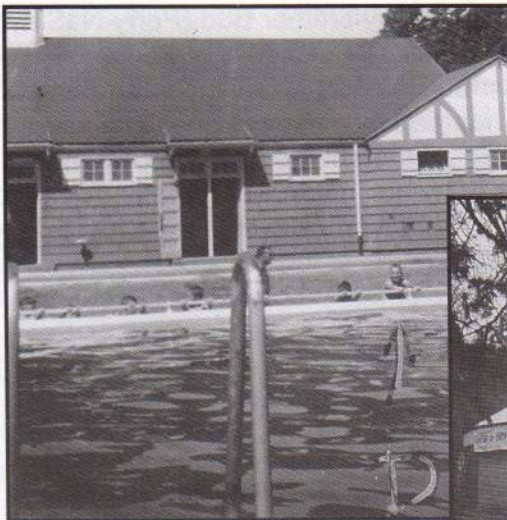
The Portland Park Bureau, back in 1909, was acquiring land and determining policies and park procedures. Columbia Park was purchased for \$5,253.25, and an extension was purchased at 10 cents a square foot bringing the total to \$65,100. Work was started on lawns, shrubbery, fencing, and flowers in 1911. By 1913, attendance at Columbia Park was an average of 225 people a day. The double swimming pool was built in 1928 and in the year 1943, 36,600 people used the pool. In 1975 the pool was covered. Twenty years later in 1995, about 650 people used the pools in one day during the summer months; and during the fall and winter months the number dropped to 200 - 300 people who were using the pool in one day.



SWIMMING AT 5 MILE LAKE CIRCA 1923



ELSIE NaSMYTHE, OSTA FAY NaSMYTHE  
LOLETA WESTON



UNHEATED POOL COLUMBIA PARK  
CIRCA 1950



COVERED POOL COLUMBIA PARK 1995

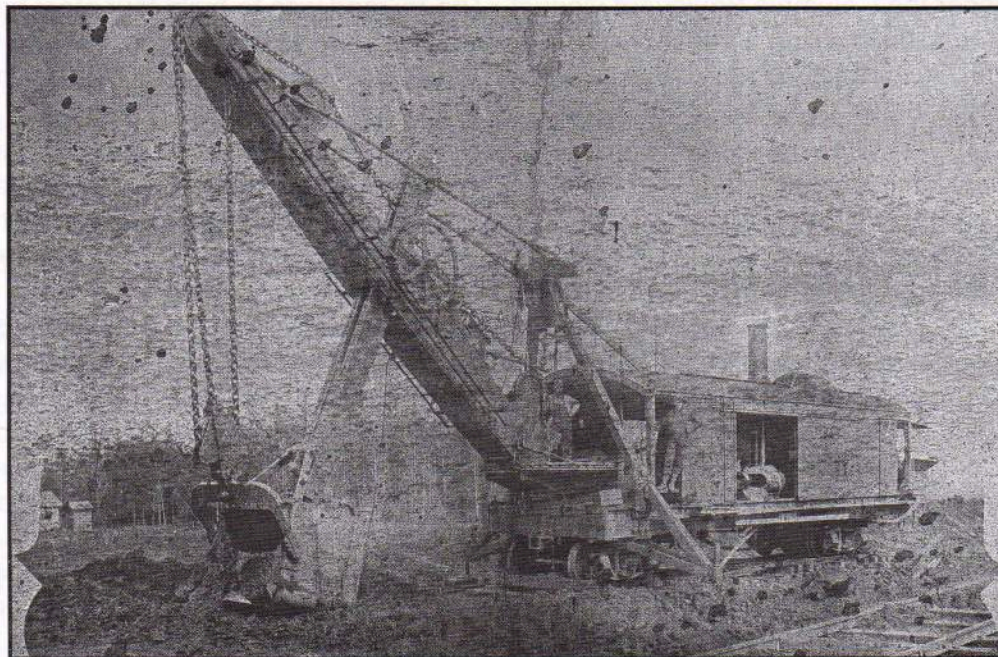


## CUT AND TIED By Elsie NaSmythe Norris

Having been born and raised in East St. Johns, a block from the cut and the railroad depot, I thought it time to find out the who and the why of the undertaking. When I was a baby, I watched the trains go by while in my baby buggy. Later, I played around the cut just to see the trains go under the Columbia Boulevard bridge. The engineer would pull the whistle cord and wave to us as we watched the billowing smoke and steam rise skyward. In earlier days the level stretch of land called East St. Johns expanded in all directions from East St. Johns station, known then as the Great Hub. It was the business center of six business corners and was called at one time Maegly Junction. It served as an interchange point between the SP&S and UP railways.

The population of St. Johns was visibly increased after the train and car lines were established. On April 10, 1909 the plat known as East St. Johns was presented to the St. Johns Council and it was accepted. In 1915 St. Johns was admitted to the City of Portland.

Names of two of my Grandfathers are listed on the petitions. This was just before the 1918 flu epidemic - of course I caught the flu. I was sent to stay at my grandparent's house on Jersey Street. My father had to work and Dr. Graves thought I'd give it to my baby brother. Four years later she removed my tonsils at Peninsula Hospital which was located on Willamette Boulevard at Trumbull Street.



START OF THE RAILROAD CUT APPROX. 1906 - Source Louis Stone

Back in the early 1900's the railroad companies were in a hurry to be first to cover the North bank with their own lines. To make a "cut" story, I'll attempt to condense a long railroad story. In 1905, a bridge was purposed over the Columbia River (and possibly the Willamette) to provide a direct route between Tacoma and Portland. Plans for the Columbia River Bridge were submitted to the War Department and were approved February 14, 1906 and for the Willamette River bridge June 21, 1906. The first train to cross the two new bridges was Mr. James J. Hill's special train on November 5, 1908. One item of interest to me was that when a line between East



St. Johns and the Columbia River Bridge was built, a Timber Pile Trestle was installed; about 1918 a fill was put there which covered the timber pilings. In 1948 those rotten timber pilings were said to be one reason the fill gave way, resulting in the Vanport Flood. In 1906 the existing railroad track ran into a bluff which went around the south side of the St. Johns Peninsula. The UP had a line that ran below the bluff towards St. Johns. The SP&S Railroad formed in 1905 by the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Companies gained approval to cut an open gap through the Peninsula. But in September 1906 Mayor Lane vetoed that ordinance stating that the cut would be a defacement of property and a visual blight that would destroy the unity of the district's neighborhoods. Local residents opposed the cut. The council overrode his veto on the tunnel under the bluff by a vote of ten to four. The tunnel was built in 1914 by UP. In 1908 the East St. Johns Depot (the only depot on the peninsula) was being built by SP&S and the cut was ready for a single track, making a straight line from Vancouver to the west end of the Willamette River Bridge. Some of the debris from the cut was hauled to Willbridge and used to double track the NP line, and some for the trestle off the Willamette Bridge. Work was dusty and hot. Laborers were an ongoing problem for SP&S. Midwest farmers complained to GN and NP, so they had to stop recruiting until after spring crops were planted. By 1910 the cut had been excavated to a point where a double track was in use. The deepest part of the cut was 91 feet deep under the Willamette Boulevard viaduct. Other measurements were: 82.5 feet deep under the Lombard Street viaduct, 36 feet deep under the Fessenden Street viaduct, and 26.5 feet under the Columbia Boulevard viaduct. The railroad was to build four steel bridges across the cut and a street along the east side of the cut between Willamette Boulevard and Columbia Boulevard. It was named Carey Boulevard after an attorney and it became part of our neighborhood playground.

In 1943 my mother with my two sons and myself rode a passenger train to Seaside. We didn't stay long because the cabin we had rented was full of fleas and we had to leave. As many as six passenger trains a day ran between Seaside and Portland. In 1952 passenger trains were discontinued and the line became freight only, except for an occasional excursion train.

And now come the "Tied" part. The railroad reached Hamilton Creek Spur on the Washington side in 1907. In 1914 Cecil Lee Norris and Elsie Elaine (Webster) Norris were living in the logging camp there when their son Cecil A. Norris was born. Later Cecil L. was moving trains around in other logging camps at Deer Island and in California. They purchased a house at 6656 N. Mears Street, and he was working in the ship yards. Several times during the twenties they rented the house out while he worked in California. During one of these times, Billye Maxine lived there. In the thirties and forties I lived in that house twice. We bought the vacant lot between 6656 and 6676, filled it in to level it, then divided it - giving each house a larger yard. Ramsdens, from whom we bought the lot, lived across the street, in the same house that Ila and Perry BeLieu had owned. Their son, Kenneth E. and Cecil A. Norris were friends from way back as were their parents and Dr. Graves. One set of these parents became my in-laws and the other were my aunt and uncle. Billye Maxine's aunt (Adeline Birdsall) lived there at one time as did my cousin Phoebe (Stephenson) Milsted. I was born on Mears Street and married Cecil A. in 1935.

Another tie is that my grandfather Benjamin Franklin BeLieu married Sarah Isabelle Cox - daughter of Martin A. Cox and Eliza Southerland. They came to Oregon with the railroad and settled in Hood River in 1883 and in SE Portland by 1900. He once received the triangle piece of property on which the Skidmore Fountain now stands for a back bill of \$125.00. Their children were Nancy, Albert, Perry and Eva-Belle. Nancy married John Andrew NaSmythe. He spent 30 years with the UP in Troutdale. I never



met him because Nancy went home to her parents after my father was born. They were divorced in 1901. Their sons were Ralph and Elwell. Nancy married Joseph B. Fletcher in 1906. Ralph went with the Fletchers and Elwell remained with his grandparents who raised him. In 1906 the BeLieu and Fletcher families were living in East St. Johns. Benjamin built houses with his sons, Perry and Bert. They built the two houses on the northeast corner of Mears at Macrum. A third house is to the west on Mears Street. It was purchased by Anna and Marshall Taylor. By 1916 Joe Fletcher had a plumbing shop on the SW corner of Jersey Street at New York Street. Ralph and Elwell NaSmythe were plumbers with him until 1929. Perry was a street car conductor for a while and then was a police officer with the North Precinct until he retired.

Another tie is that my other Great Grandmother Angeline (Viers) Ackley lived in Nebraska. Her daughter Alvira married Daniel Franklin Bellamy and they had nine children while living in Nebraska. I've been told Dan's grandfather was a victim of an Indian massacre in Plum Creek near North Platte. Angeline's husband died and she and other family members, including Dan Bellamy and his family joined a wagon train and came to Oregon by railroad. Some of them stopped at Brownsville. In 1909 Dan and Alvira's family came on to St. Johns with their nine children and built two houses on Astor Street at the NE corner at Oregonian. Alvira's sister Celia, who had remained in Nebraska, came to St. Johns in 1922 with her husband, Oscar Stephenson and their children William-Leo, Ruby and Phoebe. They bought a house on Central Street. Shortly thereafter, Celia's mother, Angeline Ackley left Brownsville, and bought a house across the street from them on Central Street. Living near the Denton family, Phoebe and Florence (Denton) Evans were grade school chums. Daniel and his sons were carpenters and lathers. From 1923 to 1925, they had a billiards parlor on Jersey Street. One son, Lyman, was a Bachelor Club member and played football. One daughter, Osta Fay, married Elwell NaSmythe and they lived out their lives on Mears Street. Perry and Elsie were both born to them in 1916.

In 1995, I was introduced to a nice lady while we were having a book sale for the St. Johns Heritage Association. Lo and behold, she was cute little Billye Max (Carpenter) Cox from our childhood neighborhood "gang"! We and our families had been friends way back when East St. Johns was our private Shangri La. I've seen many changes in St. Johns, but memories of what East St. Johns was in "our time" will remain. I still go to the Columbia Pool, where the arthritis relief class is led by my brother's granddaughter. Now we have to pay to swim there, and the swimming trophies are being won by my great grand-daughters.

Here are some quirky bits about some St. Johns ties. The mother of Tom Bowe (Ruby Stephenson's husband) was a sister of Florence Evan's mother. Does this make me related to Florence? Also, one of my mother's brother's daughters married the brother of Florence's husband (Bob's) brother's wife. I graduated from Roosevelt in the class of 1934 with Florence's sister Laura. And just one more - one of my mother's brothers married a daughter of Maxine (Crouch) Lee's mother's sister. So her cousins are my cousins. Railroads have ties and people have ties. If you think this story is too long or non sequitur, you should have seen it before I "cut" it.

Bibliography: "The Northwest's Own Railway" by Walter Grande, "The North Bank Road" by John Gaertener, "The Shaping of a City" by Kimbark Maccol, were read for the "CUT" story. Names of streets and their derivation are from the book "Portland Names And Neighborhoods" by Eugene E. Snyder. Columbia Park information from city council meetings and Portland Park Bureau. City Council Meeting Minutes can be located at the Chimney Park Archives Building.

Information about Skidmore Fountain land was taken from a handwritten letter written in 1956 from Perry Belieu. Other sources are cancelled checks, letters, and abstracts. Some information about East St. Johns was taken from a printed article in the library duplicated for me to use by Billye Cox, Heritage member.





VIEW OF ST. JOHNS BRIDGE SPAN FROM PHILADELPHIA STREET



SHOPPING IN ST. JOHNS - 1941 (Note Prices!)

Source - Photos by Al Monner, February 2, 1941 Sunday Oregon Journal



## MEMORIES By Florence Denton Evans

I was born in St. Johns on Hayes Street (now Syracuse) in the second house from the corner of St. Louis on the river side. My Dad was a fireman at the Woolen Mill and we resided there until the day of my third birthday.

We moved to a house on Burlington and Central Streets. My sister Laura was born there. The grocery store operated by Bonham and Currier had an entrance on the Burlington side and I felt very big taking a note to the grocery store and charging groceries. In those days there wasn't any traffic to worry about. I also went to a house which is still on Central to get milk for the family. Central Street wasn't cut through then and the big house sat all by itself with a lot of land around it. Our yard had several big trees and I had a swing in one of them. My grandfather used to visit us there and would walk around the corner onto Chicago Street while I rode beside him on my tricycle. He gave me a nice umbrella which I treasured. One day while shopping in St. Johns my umbrella turned inside out and blew out of my hands. To my horror a white horse ran over it.

When I was five years old we moved to a small house on Central Street. It did not have electricity but had some fancy lamp holders on the wall which I found fascinating. After a short time the folks hooked up to electricity. The former owner had a delivery service and there was a big barn on the back of the place. We enjoyed playing house in the stalls. The back platform was torn off and my father used it for several years as a wood shed and storage place. The winter's supply of cord wood was piled outside to dry and be watched over at Halloween. Eventually it ended up in the shed.

When I was six years old my father took me to a boat launching at Grant Porter Smith Shipyard located at the foot of Baltimore Street. All I remember is holding his hand and admiring the bright colored pennants. About this time I started to school at Sitton (North School). My sister started to school in the portables built in front of the building. (These were not the war time portables built later). Miss Stevens whom everyone loved was the principal. There were eight class rooms in the big building - four downstairs for the lower grades and four upstairs for the higher grades. When there was an assembly the upper grades sat on the big wide stairs and the lower grades had benches which were placed in the hallway. Here the few remaining old soldiers of the Civil War came to celebrate Memorial Day with us. Here we also took part in programs. I remember I was Sleeping Beauty but don't remember if the Prince kissed me or not. I can't believe I took part in the play as I was so shy.

All the land below Reno Street where Sitton School is now was a playground for us. It had hazelnuts galore, pussy willows and wild roses. There were lots of little mounds in the ground and we were "kings of the mountains". Some low spots had depressions that held water and we named them as lakes. Many a fanciful day was spent there. The trees on the other side of the railroad tracks were thick and it was dark among them so we called them the black woods. We'd go over a stile, cross the tracks and meander up quite a hill. The hill was later cut off to build the St. Johns Incinerator which now houses the Portland Archives. Coming down we'd be on the road which led



to the slough. It was a dusty old road bordered by a split rail fence and could be followed so you would eventually come out at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers.

A lighthouse was there for years. A neighbor of ours worked on a dredge and one day took us down to spend a day with friends who had a camp there. We were thrilled with the boat ride and had a happy outing. We used to pick berries and wild roses along the railroad tracks on the Willamette side. Also wiener roasts were enjoyed on the Willamette beaches below Terminal 4. Our cousins took part in these. I have a wonderful memory of a trip down the river on the steamboat Georgiana. We stopped at several towns to take on freight and to off load some. There would be a crowd of people to meet the boat. On the way back it was dark when we got to the Willamette and there was a full moon so low you felt you could reach out and touch it. We boarded the boat at the foot of Stark Street and returned there after the trip.

The Bowes (Mom's sister) rented the house on the corner from us. My cousin Peggy and I made up and acted out plays which we practiced in the basement. My sister was our audience and my Aunt let her look down the wood lift to watch us so there were no surprises. We had big family Christmas parties and bought gifts for everyone after very careful shopping at the dime store. It didn't take much to make us happy in those days.

There were three small family stores close to us. On Reno and Burgard (now Lombard) was Mr. Johansson's store. There was no sidewalk or through street on Reno then. One day I went shopping for Mom and was promised an ice cream cone. It was rough and grassy and very uneven where Leonard crosses Reno. As I was coming back and reached a high hump a big grasshopper jumped on my hand and made me lose the ice cream off the cone. On the corner of Smith and St. Johns Avenue was a small store where we purchased pencils, paper and oh-so-good licorice sticks which are still a favorite of mine. We did quite a bit of shopping at a bigger store on St. Johns Avenue and Burgard.

One of our many pleasures as children was going to the movies at the old Multnomah Theater. We thrilled to the mood music played on the new pipe organ - sometimes loud and threatening and sometimes soft and tranquil. There were serials continued from week to week. After viewing one episode we could hardly wait until the next week to see what would happen. Just as rain, sleet and snow couldn't keep the mail from being delivered, neither could it stop us from going to the show. One night we were having a swirling snow storm and my Mother was debating if we should miss the night's episode. She went out on the porch to look for the paper and a bundled up figure was trudging up the other side of the street and hailed her. She came back inside and said some darned fool had shouted at her, "Do you think it's going to snow?" The next day we found out it was my cousin who really said, "Are you going to the show?". We went - my Mother being as big a kid as we were. When the Venetian opened we thought it truly was a palace and in 1929 when "talkies" began we especially enjoyed Maurice Chevalier in "Louise". After leaving our seats we lingered in the foyer to listen to the music a little longer.

Another pastime we enjoyed was family picnics. We'd take the open cars of the interurban lines to the Oaks Park carrying our picnic baskets chock full of goodies. We



loved the rides and one of my favorites was the one with the swinging seats. Can't remember the name of it. My cousin sat in the swinging seat behind me and when we got going good he'd kick the back of my seat way out. Also when my older cousins first got cars we'd picnic along the Sandy River. I had two uncles who lived at Pleasant Home and Cottrell Stations on the interurban. One uncle ran a dairy and we loved to stay "in the country". We thought we were taking a real trip to their places. Now days it seems to be barely out of Portland.

The old James John School used to take the overflow from St. Johns grammar schools when they became crowded. My eighth grade year was spent there but I had gone the year before for cooking and sewing. The cooking session was my favorite of the two. I had a little basket in which I carried my supplies and I used it to bring home my first loaf of bread. I proudly showed it to my Music Teacher when I stopped for my piano lesson. On the other hand I dreaded the day we had sewing although I enjoyed the big upstairs classroom that looked out on the river traffic. Mostly I took my lunch to school in a brown bag but some days could buy my lunch at the bakery. They made sandwiches on nice fresh buns and of course there were all kinds of desserts.

For four years I walked to Roosevelt High School and was joined on the way by various others at different times. When it snowed it was beautiful through the unimproved part of Central Street. On the way there was a house with a very steep roof and several dormers with a big tree beside it. I thought it looked like a Christmas card when covered with a fluffy white coating. The ground was very uneven and sometimes I'd step into a deep place and the snow would go over my boot tops. When we were younger and it snowed we'd sit around our big heater drinking hot chocolate and reading "Snowbound".

These growing up years went all too fast and soon it was time to go on with our grown up lives.



VENETIAN THEATRE FEBRUARY 14, 1927 (NOW ST. JOHNS THEATRE)

Source - Oregon Historical Society



We delivered handbills every week on Thursday after school. Don decided it was cheaper to give Barb and me five cents each to take care of his job than it was for him to take the time. One of my favorite jobs was to stack oranges and apples in a pyramid shape for a display. The penny candy case was always interesting, but Mother always said we could have fruit, but no candy. My Grandfather Mergens bought me a U-No bar one time and to this day it is a favorite.

One of our pastimes in the summer was to have a lemonade stand beside the store. We put the signs and advertising near the front door to entice customers before they entered the store. The delivery driver from Franz Bakery would load my sister and me into the big bread basket and carry us into the building.

In those days the produce, milk, meat and bread men came every day. A couple times a week Dad went to "Early Morning Market" at 5:00 or 6:00 AM to pick up fresh products. An order was called to the wholesale house for canned food, cereals, flour and sugar (some sold by the pound); also, kerosene and coal oil pumped from a barrel out in the back shed into their own containers. Mayonnaise and pickles came in large glass containers with wooden lids and ice cream in big tubs to be scooped out with a paddle to be put into cartons or a scoop for cones. There were a lot of things sold in bulk like sugar, flour and even peanut butter. We learned early to be clean and careful when handling food.

During the depression every one was struggling to make ends meet. My parents offered credit to anyone who sincerely asked for it. Some worked off this debt by doing chores or repairs around our house. Many accounts were still unpaid when they left the business.

The grocery continued in operation with my parents until 1943 when, with the hassle of food stamps, government regulations and their own health concerns, they closed the store. The building later was operated by a couple whose last name was Mack.

The building is still standing and in operation - the only small grocery store on Willamette Boulevard in 1997.



SCHUMAN HOME AND BOULEVARD GROCERY Source - Beverly Schuman Stone



## THE ST. JOHNS THAT I KNEW by George Tennant

My parents, the late Richard James Tennant and Mildred Amelia Tennant, moved to the St. Johns area from Sellwood in 1913 and resided at our home at 926 N. Syracuse Street near the corner of St. Johns Avenue. (That house is no longer standing). There were four of us children, Raymond Leland "Ginge" from father's former marriage, George "Jack", younger brother Richard Thomas "Tommy" and my sister Dorothy.

My father worked for Multnomah County both as a deputy sheriff and later as the engineer of the James John, Lionel Webster and Multnomah Ferries. As my brother Tom and I grew a little older, we were given the detail of taking my father's lunch down to the ferry (Lionel Webster) where we would spend the remainder of the day riding from St. Johns to Whitwood Court helping Dad and Captain Weir take passengers, horse and wagons and gasoline vehicles from one side of the river to the other. Dad would give us his scraps of bread and we, once underway, would feed the sea gulls by throwing the bread out onto the Willamette River. Never a dull moment was there in the crossings as we would see many many river boats as they plied the river with their different cargoes and missions.

My favorite boat was the George H. Mendall, a government sounding boat which tied up at the local government moorage near Portland Gas & Coke Company located just south of the St. Johns Bridge. She was a trim craft, white with black trim and an orange stack and, oh, the beautiful swells she made as she plied the river! Of course she was different than most of the other boats on the river at that time. She was propeller driven and the others were stern or sidewheelers, such as the Lone, Weone, Bailey Gatzert and others. There was the Georgianna and the Dixie - steam prop driven. I remember when they replaced the Lionel Webster with the new ferry, Multnomah. The Multnomah was diesel with ocean going type propellers and the first run she made from Whitwood Court Landing to the St. Johns side, the engineer (not my father) gave her too much speed and she tore log rafts and houseboats loose that were moored near the ferry slip at the west side of the river. John Redding and Captain Brooks were kept busy most of that day rounding up log rafts and houseboats with their tugs. The ferry Multnomah was taken to the Hawaiian Islands after the St. Johns Bridge was completed and used in the same type service there. I am told that she made the trip from Portland to the Islands under her own power.

The St. Johns that I knew included many German speaking peoples. The young people didn't speak much English. My father conversed with them in German when they gathered at our house for doughnuts and punch. As I recall, all of the streets in St. Johns were dirt and in St. Johns business district, now N. Lombard Street, there were boardwalks built just above the dirt road and in front of the business houses. How my brother and I used to love to run along the boardwalks and jump off into that fine dust street. Usually we were barefoot and that fine dust was like flour or some kind of foot powder on my feet. Even the mud felt good when I would jump off the walks into the muddy streets after a rain. Many and many a sliver and stubbed toe were come by as we ran along those plank sidewalks.

How we used to sled down the hills located at Edison Street near St. Johns Avenue, sliding down the hill toward the railroad tracks. We never tired and there was



always a gang involved in snowball fights after our sleighing episodes. And the skinny dipping in the cannery slough that was located just west of the Portland Woolen Mills between the railroad tracks and the Willamette River. Old Dad Gee had a place that he built, located at the west end of the cannery slough. After we got through swimming we used to stop by and talk to Dad Gee a lot. Sometimes a few green apples from the Thurston orchards topped off the day.

Near the Portland Woolen Mills site, west of Edison Street and the railroad tracks on what would be St. Louis, the U.S. Army had a barracks housing for the soldiers of World War I that the St. Johns kids used to go through a lot looking for trinkets of sorts. I spent a lot of my spare time looking for things in those old barracks buildings. Most of these were torn down or moved some way or another and used as homes in different parts of the St. Johns area.

One of my greatest thrills was riding the trolley car from St. Johns to Greeley and Killingsworth where we transferred to another trolley to go over to the big city of Portland, Oregon. The big thrill was coming back to St. Johns in later years when the trolley made the trip from Lombard around Wall and Fessenden Streets. The conductor seemed to open the motor up to full speed as he sped along the tracks of North Fessenden headed to St. Johns and "boy" how she would rock and roll as she sped along those tracks. When we arrived at N. Lombard and Fessenden I was almost glad to leave that street car. I never heard of ninety miles an hour in those days but if I had, I would have sworn we were going that fast.

The St. Johns City Hall at the base of the triangular piece of property was a beautiful place in those days. At the south end of the block where the building is situated, there was a men's and ladies' rest room that had a band stand situated on its roof part. Every summer there were concerts held there. In the center of Philadelphia and Ivanhoe Streets was one of the largest circular, most beautiful horse watering troughs I have ever seen. The trough had some sort of statue and fountain in its center and the base that held the water must have been twelve to fifteen feet in diameter. It had rings around the base that one could tie his horse to and of course wait in the dirty street there. There was another smaller fountain and horse trough in front of the telephone company office near Richmond and Jersey. The city used to have picnics of sorts at the 1<sup>st</sup> location and there would be horse races from N. Philadelphia Street down Syracuse towards the terminal and back. I remember that at one of these horse races, Arnold Muck was aboard a horse and was doing quite well until he got off the beaten path and onto the sand that they were dredging in to make a fill for Terminal #4. (The building of Terminal #4 Flour Mills was really something for St. Johns). The horse and rider got bogged down in that sand fill and had to be pulled out. The greased pig affair was another big event during those times.

There was always something to do in old St. Johns. Fishing along the banks of the Willamette River, Gatton Lake, the Columbia Slough and River. In the early summer months one could walk to the Bybee Dam where you could catch crappies and bass, some of which weighed in the neighborhood of two pounds. Catfish were thick along the Willamette, the best spot seemed to be where Shaver had their log rafts tied up near Terminal #4. The lakes west of the flour mills abounded in ducks and geese and other game.

The Willamette River was so clean in those days and beach rights were available



any place along the St. Johns side of the river. Us kids favorite place was the coal bunkers and sulphur docks for diving, located at the east side of Terminal #4 along the Willamette River. It was here that Shaver Transportation had a log boom and Captain Miller with his tug the "Echo" watching the rafts. He and his wife lived in a house boat in the center of the log raft and he would raise hell with us kids when we swam out and got onto those rafts. When we would see him coming we would dive between the logs and swim underneath them until we figured we were far enough away, then we would come up and swim to shore and dress as fast as we could get away from there. Some of the fellows could have won the Olympics. There was Raymond Kohanek, Chuck and Buster Derieux, Herb Janke, Lewis Janke, and the Catto boys. Other "skinny dipping" friends included Darrell Thompson, Harry Peterson, Norm Lind and Johnny Hocker.

The St. Johns Bachelor Club furnished most of the athletic shows for the St. Johns residents with their football field at N. Wall Street where they played Albina, Montavilla and other notable teams. My brother-in-law "Scoot" Lind played many a game there and at their later football stadium located near the old Oregon Shipyard on N. Burgard Street. He and his brothers, Donald "Pinkie" Lind and "Grit" Lind were very fine athletes in many, many sports. Other sportsmen included "Skee" Larsen, Stewart and Ron Glenn, Harvey and "Quack" Laurie, Jimmy Jower known as Ah Wing Lee, Al Tetzloff, Sherm Cochran, Pat and Mickey Barker, "Spud" Surber, Roscoe Luce, "Twist" Frank, Curt and Kelly Roberson, "Squatty" Fletcher, "Dinty" Moore, "Porky" Dunn, "Smokey" Mueller, and Eddie and Joe Foss. The Bachelor Club took no backward steps from anyone in those days, be it football, baseball or whatever. They later started a boxing arena in what was later to be the Phillips, Staats Clinic. Here they had such boxers as Mickey Barker, Roy Ockley, Paul Karch, Frankie Monroe and Pat O'Day. Most of these were from the St. Johns area. Smokers were held for amateur boxers such as Al Vanderwall, Rosie Montag, Oggie Krebs, Bud Zimmerman, Tom Monroe, Herb and Walter Janke, Francis "Bob" White and my brother and I tried. I believe the first amateur boxing match that I attended was held by the Bachelor Club in the upper story of what is now Crouchleys Plumbing Shop. Walter "Roughhouse" Janke was one of the boxers and a friend of my family so I went there to see him win that fight. I could go on and on. The St. Johns Bachelor Club at least gave us a chance to go athletic. Later boxing smokers were at the Odd Fellows Hall on N. John Avenue, now the Doric Masonic Hall.

My brother, Tom, my sister, Dorothy, and I attended the Episcopal Church which was located in a room over the St. Johns Hardware Store. Our Priest was the Reverend John Rice who later wrote for the St. Johns Review.

We all attended Sitton Grade School, "the old one", which was located on N. Hudson Street near Reno Avenue. The principal was a woman and one of the greatest persons in Oregon. We called her Miss Stevens. She was unmarried and lived on the west side of the Willamette River on the hillside near the west bridge approach. She was a lovely lady and so very kind to the pupils in her school. Miss Stevens bought and paid for our first baseball uniforms. She paid for them out of her own pocket because she wanted us to be on a par with the other schools in the area. We won most of our games that year because we were so proud and also to show thanks to her. We graduated from Sitton to attend Roosevelt High School.

My brother Tom and I delivered the News Telegram Paper in the St. Johns area



for some time. I had the route from N. Oswego Street to Oregon Shipyards and from the Willamette River to Columbia Boulevard. The houses were few and far between as was the pay, but the job kept us from mischief. Tom had the route from Oswego to the railroad cut and from the river to Columbia Boulevard. Believe you me when we finished those papers we were very, very tired and hungry. My customers were good to me and always had a tip for me on collection day and some of them had a nice cold glass of milk and a piece of cake that really hit the spot on those hot summer days. It seemed that we always kept busy picking currants at the Freemont Berry Farm on N. Robert and, of course, I used to enter all of the stage contests at McCready's St. Johns Theatre where I whistled bird calls to the organ music of Art Morey. I also did a little tap dance and it seems that though I competed against a lot of adults, my prize was usually the big one. McCready was a big jovial fellow and always very kind to my brother and me. Once after the passing of my father, my brother and I wanted to go to the show but we had no money, so took a couple of pop bottles up to the cashier and tried to get tickets into the theatre. The girl in the ticket booth said she couldn't accept the bottles as payment but big Mac overheard our conversation and saw our predicament. He said, "Right this way boys, just bring your bottles over to me," and let us into the theatre. I never forgot his kindness.

My uncles, Bert and Joshua Casswell, and their father, Harry, tore down the old shipyard located where the St. Johns Bridge is. The old cannery that was located just north of the shipyard was operated by Mr. Albright and the north side of the cannery building faced the slough.

My father passed away in the year 1926 when I was thirteen years of age and it really hurt. He was such a good father always trying to give us those things in life we needed so badly, especially his love.

Mother went to work at the Peninsula Hospital which was located at N. Trumbull and Willamette Boulevard. Mrs. Ringer was in charge and my mother was one of the many nurses employed there. The building still stands at the same location and is used for either apartments or a family home at this time.

I sold papers in front of Surbers Card Room which is now Dad's Restaurant. In those days the building was a two story affair, or perhaps three, of wooden structure and adjoining on the corner was a fruit stand. Forsythe's Grocery Store, (where the late Terry Shrunck, "Our Mayor", once clerked as a high school student), was located near the Peninsula Bank and just up the street, on Lombard and John Streets was Charlie Muck's Grocery Store. We bought from Charlie for many years until he finally sold his business to the Forsythe family. Also Jowers Clothing Store located near N. Chicago and Jersey where Dad bought all of our clothing. Berry's Meat Market, located just across the street from Jowers, where the Berry boys cut meat for so many years and later the Sestak brothers took the market over.

I remember the fight to get the St. Johns Bridge and how Tom Buckles, who did so much work to bring the bridge to this area, fought to have it located at N. St. Louis (Fessenden), but there were other plans and the bridge was put at its present location.

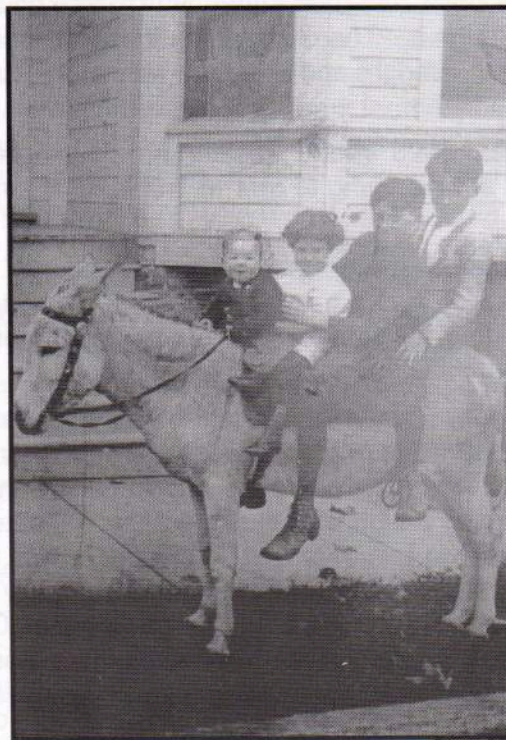
The St. Johns Police Department was made up of Captain Tichenor, Sgt. Frank Brown, Sgt. Maxwell, Griff Roberts, Roy Thompson, Officer Levrenz, Officer Charles Brown, Officer Perry Belieu and others. They were real nice men and were always



helpful to the younger people. Oh yes, one officer I forgot that was always helping the younger people was Farmer. He was a big man that always smoked Bull Durham cigarettes and was the most understanding policeman I ever met.

### **A Fond Remembrance by Dollie Harris Tennant**

That wonderful coincidence: Met my to-be husband's father Richard James Tennant as the Engineer on the St. Johns Ferry in about 1920. I was fifteen, but I didn't meet Jack, who was eight, until he was 22 and I was 29. . .(I have a ) vivid picture of being on the ferry and meeting this wonderful, kind man. He was so, in my estimation, dignified and precious. My husband was just a kid. I think that was the strangest coincidence. I knew his dad many, many years before I knew my husband. It's unbelievable that I'd know his dad because his dad died when my husband was only thirteen. I never did meet the two of them together, but our paths had crossed on Sauvie Island where the father often took the two boys and where in the 1930's I taught at Willow Bar, a one-room school.



JACK TENNANT, DOROTHY  
& RAYMOND "GINGE"  
AND UNCLE JOSHUA CASSWELL



RICHARD "TOMMY", RICHARD (FATHER) AND  
GEORGE "JACK" TENNANT



## ST. JOHNS WOODS HOUSING PROJECT By June Eilenstine

My memories of the St. Johns Woods housing project are of the post World War II period. My parents, Bob and Stella Perkins, my sister, Glenda, our dog, Mickey and I lived there from 1944 to 1950. The project was built as part of a massive effort on the part of the city and the federal government to house the shipyard workers who were desperately needed for the war effort. There were a total of 967 units in St. Johns Woods, laid out in a pattern that allowed for wide common lawns between the housing units. The units were all single family houses and duplexes. There were two sections, with one section south of Swift Boulevard (now Columbia Boulevard) adjacent to Pier Park, and another section where we lived, north of Swift Boulevard between Swift and the Union Pacific line.

My parents both came from "Down South" (Florida and Mississippi). They had moved from Los Angeles to Harrisburg in 1940, then from Harrisburg to Portland in April 1943, when I was eighteen months old. The Great Depression ended for my parents the day they moved to Portland and my father went to his new job at the shipyard. At first they lived on Weidler Street and then moved to St. Johns Woods.

My memories are all of the kind that a small child would have. My sister was five years older than I, which made it possible for me to go some places and do some things that I would otherwise have not been able to. On hot days we would walk up a dirt track that must have been Mohawk or Allegheny and up Fessenden to go swimming at Pier Park, and often went to the little store at the corner of Oswego and Fessenden. Sometimes we would go roller-skating on the sidewalk under the big trees in front of my sister's school on Calhoun. Often on Saturday afternoons my father would drop us off at the St. Johns Theatre. The line of children would stretch way around the block. There would be a din of noise until the curtain went up, and screams and whistles when the good guys showed up. There was a crying room for mothers with babies. We saw mostly westerns and family or children's films, but this was the height of the "film noire" period, and we saw adult films such as "Sorry, Wrong Number" and "Strangers On a Train". We also saw newsreels that showed the suffering people over in Europe. We were very conscious of how fortunate we were to be Americans.

Back in the project we would join in games such as "Mother-May-I" and "Red Rover, Come Over". Occasionally to our amazement, huge blimps would drift by overhead. Once my little friend, Everett, and I ran off down to the railroad tracks. We were paddled by our mothers all the way home. On summer evenings, we would play hide and seek until it was too dark to see. One night, my parents, my sister and I laid on a blanket on the lawn and watched a shower of falling *stars*. Sunday School was at the project community building. There was also a grocery store and Laundromat. Wartime project homes did not have electric stoves so my mother had a big old iron wood stove.

My mother had a lovely singing voice. I used to brag to the other children that my mother sang as well as a singer on the radio. This was still radio days, and my sister and I would curl up and gaze into the warm light of the radio to listen to our favorite shows. Our imaginations provided the video. Among our favorite shows were "I Love a Mystery", "The Cisco Kid", "My Friend Irma", "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon", "Suspense" and "Our Miss Brooks". On Saturday mornings we would listen to "Let's Pretend". In the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas we would rush home from school to listen to "The Cinnamon Bear".

There were some tough kids in the project. Some areas I wouldn't venture into without being accompanied by my big sister. There was a gully that ran north from



Oswego down to the slough which I used as a shortcut. I would hurry through it, on the lookout for marauding toughies.

My friends and I would play dolls for hours, lost in our make believe grown-up world where we had all the tribulations and worries of our parents plus some that we thought up ourselves. One of my friends was an immigrant child from Yugoslavia. Once I unknowingly terrified her by telling her that our houses were going to be torn down someday. She ran home in hysterics because, as it was explained to me later, she associated the tearing down of houses with the destruction she had lived through in the war in Europe.

I barely remember the flood that destroyed Vanport on Memorial Day 1948. The rains had been very heavy that spring, and our section of St. Johns Woods was on a low elevation, close to the Columbia Slough. I remember my father reassuring my mother that our area was not in danger of being flooded.

My grade school, Oregon Shipyard School, was shaped like a flattened wheel with classrooms projecting outward toward the fence like inverted spokes. It had been a child care facility for Oregon Shipyard workers during the war, and from the school years 1946-47 through 1952-53 it was a grade school serving grades 1-4. It was a temporary facility meant to alleviate overcrowding in nearby schools. The building is no longer there, but it was between Roberts and Terminal Road on Burgard Road (Lombard).

My father had been trained as an electrician during the war and belonged to IBEW, Local 48. I still have his union card. He would dress up in his best suit with vest and watch chain to go to union meetings.

We did most of our grocery shopping at Fred Meyer and our other shopping at the little shops in St. Johns. On Saturday mornings my father would take me along when he went to St. Johns. For a dime I could purchase a comic book or a book of paper dolls at the Coronet Variety Store. Back then, Fred Meyer was partitioned into three separate stores that opened on a common front aisle.

Downtown St. Johns seemed like a special place to me even as a child with its' compact town square configuration and tree-lined streets. There was even a pond in front of the police station that had a scale model of the St. Johns Bridge.

In 1950 we moved out to the country on the other side of the West Hills where my father built us a house. After that we would come down Germantown Road and across the St. Johns Bridge to shop in St. Johns. In 1954 my father died. Sometime after that my mother and I were out for a drive and we saw the project being torn down. Even though we knew it was going to happen someday, it was something of a shock and another loss on top of the sense of loss we were already feeling.

I still think that St. Johns is a uniquely interesting part of Portland, perched as it is at the northern tip of the city, with its' amazing view of one of the most beautiful bridges in the world. To me, it is the place that for awhile provided shelter and a sense of security for my parents, and it will always be a very special place in my heart.



STELLA PERKINS  
Source June Eilenstine