



MEMORIAL DAY

WHY WE CELEBRATE IT

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THE HITCHING POST

**The Oregon Area Historical Society Newsletter
Vol. 2 - May 2022**

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The purpose of the Oregon Area Historical Society shall be to collect, preserve, and share knowledge of the history of the Oregon area.



The Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) was organized in 1893 with Stella Graves as president. The group was very active in Oregon after WWI. Members maintained the graves of veterans. On Memorial Day, a well known speaker addressed a large crowd at Cronk's Opera House. Carrying flags and bouquets to put on the graves, children marched from the Opera House to the cemetery.



MEMORIAL FLAG TO FLY AT THE OREGON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM



Russell Neath – WWII Veteran



Mary Neath Norwell observes the memorial flag raising with Joel Olson, OAHs President and Dixie Brown, Museum Coordinator

OREGON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES DONATION OF MEMORIAL FLAG OF WWII VETERAN, RUSSELL NEATH

Mary Neath Norwell, daughter of Russell Neath, has graciously donated her father's memorial flag to the Oregon Area Historical Society. It will replace the current flag which is becoming worn.

Russell Neath was a longtime resident of Oregon. He served our country during World War II in the European Theatre and was awarded the U.S. Army Good Conduct Medal for outstanding efficiency in service. He left for overseas in November, 1942 and landed in Casablanca. He was later relocated to Palermo and remained there through the entire Sicilian campaign.

Upon discharge, Russell returned to Oregon where he raised his family and spent most of his career working at the Oregon School for Girls. He lived in Florida for several years. In his later years, he returned to Oregon to be closer to his daughter and family.

One of the highlights of his later years was the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. accompanied by his daughter, Mary.

The Oregon Area Historical Society acknowledges and thanks Tom Bjornson of Oregon WI for suggesting that a marker be placed at the site of this Maple Tree in remembrance of Pvt. William Johnson and in honor of the history it represents.



The marker reads:

This tree was planted in memory of Pvt. William M. Johnson, the only soldier from Oregon killed in action in World War I.

The Oregon Woman's Club led a drive to transport a red maple seedling from the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery at Romagne, France where he is buried.

The original tree was replaced in 2008.
Marker placed by the Oregon Area Historical Society and the Village of Oregon.



PVT. Wm. MELVIN JOHNSON
 Feb. 6, 1890 – Nov. 4, 1918



Memorial Day Observance -1904



Memorial Day Observance -2021



O.A.H.S. Military Room Display

Memorial Day is a solemn commemoration of the men and women who gave their lives in the service of their country. Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) dates back to the time of the Civil War. It is unclear exactly where the tradition originated. Numerous communities may have independently held informal memorial gatherings. Some records show that one of the earliest commemorations was organized less than a month after the Confederate surrender in 1865 by a group of formerly enslaved African Americans in Charleston, S.C. at a horse racing track that housed a Confederate prison holding Union soldiers.

On May 5, 1868, John A. Logan, the commander in chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) issued a proclamation promoting a national holiday on May 30th which called for a nationwide day of remembrance. It was first observed on May 30th, 1868 with a speech by then Ohio congressman, James A. Garfield to a crowd gathered at Arlington National Cemetery before strewing flowers upon the graves of the soldiers. Garfield had served as a Union major general during the Civil War.

General Ulysses S. Grant presided over a crowd of about 5,000 people in a Memorial Day observance at Arlington National Cemetery on May 30th, 1873. Orphaned children of military members killed in the war placed flowers and small flags at both Union and Confederate graves throughout the entire cemetery.

In 1882, the name of the holiday was changed from Decoration Day to Memorial Day. It was not declared the official name by federal law until 1967. Congress passed an act making May 30th a holiday in the District of Columbia in 1888.

In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, effective in 1971. This named the last Monday in May as the date of Memorial Day observances, replacing May 30th. The same law made Memorial Day a national holiday.

Many places claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. Congress and President Lyndon Johnson declared Waterloo, New York as the birthplace of Memorial Day on May 30, 1966.

The World Wars turned it into a day of remembrance for all members of the U.S. military who died in service. Many communities, including Oregon, participate in commemorating Memorial Day with ceremonies conducted by the Oregon-Brooklyn VFW and the American Legion. American flags are placed at the gravesites of Oregon area veterans.

Excerpts used to compile this history were taken from on-line sources including USA Today,

Early Settlements of the Oregon Area

Lake Harriet

Lake Harriet School was built in 1849 for \$100. It stands on the northeast corner of Storytown Road and Sun Valley Parkway. The first teacher was Sara Simons. Family names in the area were: Ace, Bernard, Bethel, Brown, Byrne, Clark, Maher, O'Neill and Pierce.

In 1867, a new larger building replaced the log structure. It was made into a home soon after the students were transported to the Oregon Public Schools in 1940. During the winter of 1861-62, John Muir, widely known conservationist, taught at this school. Other teachers were Mary Jensen, Delette Sholts, Golda Lappley Brannan, Letha Williamson, Catherine Gorman, Evelyn Butts Piller and Dorothy Sholts Flood.



Lake Harriet is located about 2 miles west of the Village of Oregon on Hwy CC and Hwy D. Lake Harriet, is named for Miss Harriet Hayes, daughter of early immigrants. The lake was formed by a glacier. It is a private spring-fed lake of about 33 acres and with a depth of about 14 feet. In the early days bullheads were quite abundant and many townspeople fished and picnicked along its shores. Swimming was also popular as it was possible to walk or bike the short distance from the village. In the winter the Culp brothers, Ernie and Ed, cut the ice and stored it in a big shed on the north side of the lake. The ice was then transported in the summer to their customers in the village.



About three and one half miles west of the Village of Oregon, an acre of land was set aside. No record is available as to the exact time this cemetery was established, but it evidently took place before the Civil War. The earliest burial according to data found on a slab was that of Mary Pierce, who died in 1851. It is said that the cemetery at



one time was generally filled and was the last resting place of some of the earliest pioneers. A number of bodies have been removed and many graves are left unmarked. There are now less than two dozen monuments to be found.

Sources: Florice Paulson, *Lake Harriet History*; Oregon School District, *Rural and Village Schools 1846-1998* Oregon Area Historical Society; *Lake Harriet School -Historical Marker Database* <https://www.Hmdb.org>; <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2215347/lake-harriet-cemetery>

THE LINDSAY HOUSE ON SOUTH MAIN STREET---One of Oregon's Historic Homes

J.J. Lindsay moved to Oregon and built a large, white clapboard house and shop in about 1859. The house had wide porches with columns, and it had tall shutters on the windows. The rooms were heated by wood stoves. In 1883, Lindsay started a joint funeral service and furniture store. The tradition of the time was for men who worked with wood to fashion coffins as well as tables and chairs. The shop held both furniture and funeral equipment. At that time, preparations of bodies were carried out in people's homes. Visitations took place in individual homes as well as funeral services unless they were held in a church.

Near the start of the 1900s, Lindsay's daughter, Hattie, married Ed Booth and the business took on a new name, "Lindsay-Booth, Funerals and Furniture". In the late 1920s, the funeral and furniture business, then known as E.G. Booth and Sons, moved to the corner of Main and Jefferson Streets and continued to operate both parts of the business there.

By 1933, the old Lindsay-Booth building on South Main had become too large for the family's needs. Bonnie Booth-Bork (daughter of Bill and Gladys Booth), sent a response to an inquiry from the Oregon Area Historical Society in which she writes; "that to what she has heard, the house was split in two so my great Great Aunt could live in one half and my great grandparents (Ed and Hattie) would live in the other half which had been remodeled and was the Booth Funeral Home where visitations came to be held. . " In the back, the barn which used to house the horses became a four-car garage. Bonnie continues, "The house that was closer to downtown is where my parents lived until my mother passed away in 1959. It was later moved to State Street and the other half I believe was torn down when the clinic went on that land. The Henry's house was the next house on the other side of the Funeral Home. Our house was a 3-bedroom, 1 bath home with a beautiful staircase when you entered. The living room, dining room and kitchen were on the first floor. We had a huge yard and I can remember a swing set quite a way back in the yard made from telephone poles that I loved to swing on.!!

With our thanks and appreciation to Bonnie Booth Bork for sending her recollections of the Lindsay House on S. Main St. We are building an 'Oregon's Historic Homes File' at the museum. If anyone would like to share information or personal recollections about a house , please contact the Oregon Area Historical Society.



House built by J J Lindsay c. 1859



Remodeled- sometime prior to 1933



House after being split and moved next to WP&L



House now located on State Street

OREGON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEETING
Sunday, March 20, 2022



We were excited to once again hold an annual meeting in person. COVID interrupted our practice of holding a meeting in a historical location as we have done in recent years. This year however, the Oregon Area Historical Society held its Annual Membership Meeting on Sunday, March 20, 2022 at St. John's Lutheran Church. In keeping with a long-standing event held at St. John's, we planned our meal menu around items that were typically served at the annual Smogasbord. J L Richards provided us with white and dark meat turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, vegetables (corn and green beans), cole slaw and a bun. Volunteers supplemented the menu with bean salad, fruit salad, cranberry sauce, olives and pickles (including beet pickles by demand). Desserts included several kinds of pie, krumkake and rosettes. The event was attended by 47 members – a very good attendance at an annual meeting.

Dave Gasner welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The treasurer's report showed that despite not being able to hold any fund-raising activities in 2021, our income was supplemented by a \$2000 challenge pledge, insurance proceeds from the Ann Morris estate and an increase in member donations included with membership dues. A big 'thank-you' to our members for their additional support and to those who participated in the 'challenge'. Ann Morris will be remembered not just for her generous donation but also for her unending support and service to the Oregon Area Historical Society and Museum. Dave announced that Dixie Brown was appointed to fill the role of Museum Coordinator and applauded Melanie Woodworth for her dedication and work for OAHS and Museum. Joel Olsen recognized Dave Gasner with a Certificate of Appreciation and spoke of his contributions to the Society and service on the Board of Directors as well as serving as president for many years.

Election of Board Members results were three-year terms to be held by Kermit Traska, Bob Block and Luke Heiar. JoAnn Swenson and Sheila Virtue were appointed to one-year terms to fill the unexpired terms of Pete Manderfield and Mark O'Brien. Dave Gasner, Pat Wilkening and Deana Zentner are leaving the Board having served 3-year terms. We thank them for serving and for their leadership through their years on the Board.

St. John's Lutheran Church History

In 1883 the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rutland was built. The church was quite distinctive with its spire and bell tower that stood taller than the church itself. For 46years, it stood on a hill in the Town of Rutland, a mile south of the intersection of Center Road and Stone Road.

On February 7, 1896, a new Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in Oregon. The congregation of the Rutland Church dwindled as members preferred to attend services in Oregon. On May 1, 1898 the Oregon congregation dedicated their new building on Washington Street. The ship, the Anna Maria, was made by Andrew Christensen and hung from the ceiling of the Rutland Church. The ship represented the people on the sea of life. The ship was removed from the Rutland Church and hung from the ceiling of the new Danish Lutheran Church on Washington Street. When the old Danish church was sold, the church bell was moved to the church in Oregon. In 1934, the name was changed to St. John's Lutheran Church. Services continued to be in Danish until 1936.

In June 1949 it was decided to build a new, bigger church on the same site. Services were held in the Oregon Village Hall for the next two years. The new church was completed in 1951. It still stands on Washington Street today. In 1975, plans were made to build a new church building and education unit on the 5 acre property on Netherwood Street. The education unit was completed in 1976. During the next 5 years, Sunday School children and staff were bussed to the new building while worship services continued to be held at Washington Street. Construction began on the new church sanctuary in 1981 and it was dedicated in 1982. In 2002 a new multi-purpose room and classrooms was built and the office area and kitchen were remodeled.



Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church – Rutland



Left: First Location of St. John's – 1898 Above: New Church on Site – 1951 On Washington Street



New Educational unit completed in 1976



Sanctuary dedicated in 1982

SMORGASBORD HISTORY AT ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Gudie Huston, assisted by Pam Parsons, presented a very interesting demonstration of lefse-making. Gudie demonstrated the process of preparing the dough, shaping it into small balls and the art of rolling the dough into thin sheets. She showed the technique of picking up the lefse sheet with the lefse stick and transferring it to a special heated griddle and then turning it to bake the other side. The sheet is ready to remove from the griddle when brown spots appear. She even invited some of our members to try their hand at the process. At the end of the demonstration, she treated us to lefse samples. Following the lefse-making demonstration, Gudie continued our program with a history of the St. John's Lutheran Church Smorgasbord.



Gudie Huston and Pam Parsons demonstrate Lefse making



Dixie and Gerard try their hand in the process

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH SMORGASBORD HISTORY

The women of the church (the Ladies Aid) wanted to raise funds to equip the kitchen of the new church building on Washington Street. They decided to have 50 cent suppers once a month. This schedule was tiring. The Brooklyn Lutheran ladies had started a Smorgasbord so the Oregon ladies went to them for information and advice. St John's Ladies Aid voted to begin an annual event to be held the first Thursday of October. The first Smorgasbord was held on Thursday, October 1, 1956 at the church on Washington Street. They served 733 people and made \$762.32; an equivalent of \$7,950 today. Ticket prices the first year were \$1.50 for adults and \$0.75 for children. The 1956 the menu consisted of roast turkey and stuffing, ham, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes and gravy, German potato salad, squash, baked beans, coleslaw, creamed herring, fruit salad, cheese, cottage cheese, pickles, lefse, rolls, coffee and desserts (pies, cakes, Danish Apple squares and Scandinavian pastries). Most of the items were homemade!! Turkey, ham and creamed herring were purchased. Meatballs soon replaced the ham. In the early years, the profits from the Smorgasbord went to church improvements. By 1963, having a comfortable treasury balance, the Ladies Aid began supporting missions

The Ladies Aid became known as the Women of the Church or Women of the ELCA who met in smaller groups called circles. Initially, these circles assumed the major task of calling members asking for help in preparing menu items, and helping before, during or after the event. As the event grew, more help was solicited from confirmation students and they enlisted additional support from the men of the church. The majority of the volunteer workers were women, but as years went by men added to the volunteer staff as cooks, set-up and tear-down volunteers, ticket takers, servers, bussers, and more. It was truly becoming a church-wide event. To pull off this event was no small endeavor.

In the beginning, lefse was all made in one long day. The ladies would come early in the morning to get the potatoes ready and start the process. They would break for lunch and then finish in the afternoon. In recent years, the lefse making became a two day process with five or six sessions being held before Smorgasbord. The first day the potatoes were prepared. The next day several people gathered in the morning to roll out anywhere from 3 to 6 batches of lefse (each batch can make 60 sheets). Another crew came in the afternoon to package the lefse either for the serving table or for selling. The goal was to make 600 sheets for the serving table and over 400 sheets for selling.

Clarice Christensen had been Smorgasbord Chairman in its early years. She had a special talent of rosemaling which she shared with the Smorgasbord event. She painted the dessert table display, signs, advertising ads, prayer cards, name tags and a 50th anniversary plate. One year she was asked to make about 20 personal name tags for chairmen of the different crews, but everyone who saw them asked if she would make them one too. Being the kind and giving person she was, she said yes. In 2005, she had made over 300 – and many more after that.

What truly made Smorgasbord special was the people. Their individual and collective value is immeasurable. Congregants came together for a purpose and to work for a common goal – making new friends and connections with each other.

In January of 2020, it was decided to discontinue the Smorgasbord. The world and society had changed a great deal over the years. Many more people are working outside the home and there are many other activities that fill our lives. The event became unmanageable for an aging group of church members that carried much of the work load and donated a great deal of the food needed for the dinner. Planning the event, making the lefse and meatballs, contacting members for food and workers starts many weeks before Smorgasbord day. They were just unable to get the necessary volunteers needed to make this event happen.

Today St. John's has Fish Fries during Lent. We will never know if these events would be present if the Smorgasbords were still an annual event, but they certainly have addressed the changing needs within each community. What made St. John's Smorgasbord special was the people. We still have special people and who knows what is next. When gifts God has given us meet the changing needs of our lives, amazing things happen.

This history was prepared by Gudie Huston for a presentation given to the Oregon Area Historical Society Annual meeting in March 2022. THANK YOU, GUDIE



*THANK YOU
GERALD NEATH*



Back in 1987, a few natives of Oregon decided to start a Historical Society. Along with Eeda Lumley, Florice Paulson and others, Gerald Neath was one of those people. Since the beginning, he has been an integral part of the growth of the Historical Society. He was on the interim Board of Directors for the organization that became the Oregon Area Historical Society. He was instrumental in turning the old lumber yard building into a museum. When the "Tuesday Crew" (volunteers who come every Tuesday to do the work of the Society) was born, Jerry was there.

Gerald was born in Oregon and with the exception of the two years he spent in the Army, has lived his whole life here. He worked for the Bank of Oregon, and all the successor companies of that entity. He walked to work every day. And when he began volunteering on Tuesdays at the Museum, he walked there too.

Gerald was the OAHS representative on the Council on Aging, an auxiliary group of the Oregon Area Senior Center. He served on their personnel committee and was instrumental in interviewing and selecting a new Senior Center Director – Rachael Brickner – a few years ago.

Jerry also worked on the project to save and restore the Rutland Church - turning it from a run-down building with an overgrown cemetery to a historical centerpiece of the Town of Rutland.

About 10 years ago, OAHS Museum Coordinator Melanie Woodworth floated the idea of a "Historical Timeline" with information from bygone days; specifically 100, 50, 25 and 10 years ago. Originally written for the newsletter, it soon became a mainstay of the Oregon Observer. Jerry took on this project and wrote the timeline until just recently. A few months ago, when Jerry had to step back due to health issues, it took two people to fill his shoes. He has certainly helped shape the Historical Society and Museum for the better !!

THANK YOU, GERALD FOR ALL YOUR WORK



The above article was written and submitted by Mary Norwell on behalf of the Oregon Area Historical Society's Tuesday Crew and the Board of Directors in appreciation for Gerald's many years of volunteer work for the Historical Society.

While Gerald has limited his volunteer activities with the Tuesday Crew for health reasons, the impact of his years of service and contributions are evident in what has been accomplished in promoting the mission of the Historical Society.



FROM THE FAMILY FILES OF
THE O.A.H.S. MUSEUM



This lovely couple is Peter and Augusta Olsen. Peter was born in Denmark. Peter and Augusta's daughter, Edna, was the oldest of eight children born to this couple. Edna married William Champion. Peter and Augusta are the great-grandparents of Ann Champion Benedict, a member of the Oregon Area Historical Society.

Ann came to the museum one day to look through the family file we have for the Olsens. Ann recalled that Grandpa Peter lived with William and Edna Champion in his later years. Grandma Edna had a round dining table and the sugar bowl and salt and pepper shakers were kept on the table. Grandpa Peter took sugar in his coffee – but he had a very specific routine when it came to putting the sugar in his coffee. He would measure it out by teaspoons -- the first two would go into his coffee and the third one went into his mouth. And he always drank his coffee from a mustache cup.

THANK YOU !!

Thank You to Randy and Tina of OFroYo -Oregon Frozen Yogurt - for donating 2 - \$20 gift cards to the Oregon Area Historical society to be used for a drawing. Visitors to the Museum during the month of February and March were eligible to enter the drawing.

Winner for the month of February was Arthur Shapiro. Ann Benedict was the winner of the March drawing.



Arthur Shapiro

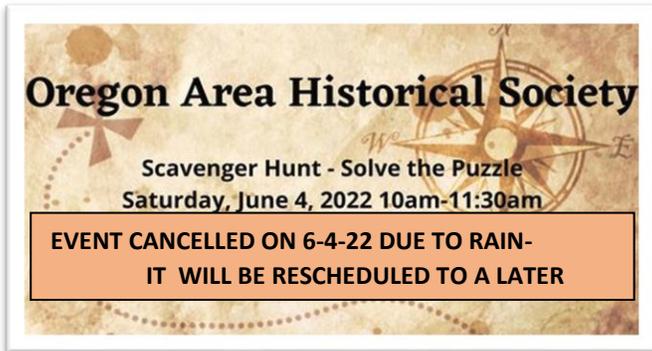


Ann Benedict



From the Museum's collection of vintage dresses, our ladies are now attired in a spring wardrobe

EVENTS



To increase awareness of some of Oregon's historic sites, the Oregon Area Historical Society is sponsoring a Historical Scavenger Hunt. Participants will visit and learn about 6 historical buildings or places. Starting at 10 a.m. at the Downtown Waterman Park, they will receive a packet that includes a puzzle board and a glue stick along with a clue for the first site. They will visit each of the six sites to receive a puzzle piece. When the puzzle is complete, they will move on to the Oregon Area Historical Society Museum, where refreshments await and where a drawing for a \$5-\$10 gift card to one of Oregon's business establishments will be held.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2022

TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2022

5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

KISER FIREMAN'S PARK



National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. Furthermore, it provides a great opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances.



OREGON HIGH SCHOOL RED BRICK REUNION
(A reunion for all who attended school in this building, or wish they had)

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2022 11 A.M.-2:00 P.M.

KISER PARK SHELTER

BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH – BROWN BAG IT
LUNCH WILL BE AT 12:00 NOON
No food or beverage will be provided/No dishes to pass

THE HITCHING POST



Quarterly Newsletter Vol. 2; June, 2022
Oregon Area Historical Society
159 West Lincoln Street -P.O. Box 262
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Oregon Area Historical Society

ICE CREAM SOCIAL *and pie*

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Join us for ice cream, pies
and the music of the
Oregon Community Band

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Tuesday, June 21
Serving at 6pm, Music at 7pm
Waterman Triangle Park

