

The OREGON OBSERVER

Thursday, October 17, 2013 • Vol. 129, No. 15 • Oregon, WI • ConnectOregonWI.com • \$1

MOYER'S INC.
LANDSCAPE SERVICES & HOMETOWN NURSERIES

40% Off All in stock container Trees, Shrubs & Perennials

25% Off All in stock B&B Trees

HOURS: M - F: 8AM - 6PM; SAT: 8AM - 4PM; SUN: 10PM - 4PM

WWW.MOYERSINC.NET (608) 873-9141
936 STARR SCHOOL ROAD, STOUGHTON



Photos by Jeremy Jones

Oregon Area Historical Society members Ann Morris (left) and Melanie Woodworth sort through items Saturday that were found in Florice Paulson's estate. Paulson, who died in June, named the historical society as a beneficiary in her will.

Taking apart a time capsule

Museum finds unexpected treasures in Paulson estate

BILL LIVICK
Unified Newspaper Group

Ann Morris wasn't sure what she'd found.

The Oregon Area Historical Society member was going through yet another box at the estate of the late Florice Paulson, this one full of hats, and pulled out a red wool cap she thought might have belonged to a child.

She passed it on to fellow volunteer Melanie Woodworth and asked if she had any idea.

"That looks like a Civil War kepi, but it's red," Woodworth responded, not exactly sure what to make of it. "I know somebody who will know."

Woodworth phoned her husband, Doug, an avid scholar of the Civil War, and he confirmed her hunch, with its markings revealing that it was a Confederate artillery officer's cap, something rare even for historical collections.

"Doug was very excited," she

What they found

Items of value or special historical interest:

- Civil War kepi (hat)
- Rare, first-print edition books
- Postcards from near and far
- Dishes
- Clothing
- Remington plates
- Road maps
- Marbles and other toys
- Furniture, including book cases from Oregon's first library

said. "It's quite extraordinary that something like this would survive."

The kepi is just one example of the time capsule that members of the Historical Society discovered at the home of Paulson, who died June 11 at the age of 95.

Paulson was an only child who never married or had children – and she collected everything.

In her will, she made the historical society a beneficiary of her estate, the third in line behind two distant cousins. One of the cousins claimed some furniture and a few odds and ends; the other "signed off" on everything.

"It was determined that all the remaining contents would be the property of the historical society because we need a significant amount of time to go through everything," Melanie Woodworth explained.

The coordinator of the Oregon History Museum and a board member of the historical society, Woodworth and several others – including her husband, Morris, Jerry Neath, Phil Meyer and Kermit Traska – spent hundreds of hours over the past two months sorting through the things

Turn to **Treasure**/Page 12



Among items found in Paulson's estate was a commemorative plate from the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893.



Volunteers found a toy horse, along with a collection of old photos.



Paulson kept an assortment of vintage books and games.



Melanie and Doug Woodworth were most excited about finding this Civil War kepi.

Oregon School District

Board approves handbook change

Compromise reached on teacher discipline

SCOTT DE LARUELLE
Unified Newspaper Group

After wrangling for months over "just cause" language removed from the Oregon School District employee handbook last year, school board members reached a compromise of sorts on new language that determines how the district disciplines or fires teachers.

Debate on the issue at Monday night's board meeting stretched for several hours, with language proposed by member Rae Vogeler defeated 4-3 before another version written by member Steve Zach was approved, 6-1.

The new wording will replace existing sections

Turn to **Handbook**/Page 3

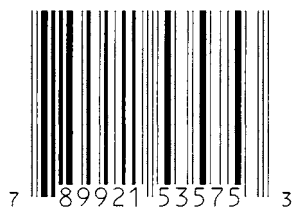
Students get up-close look at local industry

SCOTT DE LARUELLE
Unified Newspaper Group

For manufacturers, it's a great way to introduce young people to the fast-changing world of industry. For students, it's an opportunity to learn about a possible career path that is full of jobs.

It all came together for Oregon High School students at "Manufacturing Day," held Friday at Stoughton Trailers' headquarters. They toured

Turn to **Industry**/Page 13



The OREGON OBSERVER

Unified Newspaper Group Publications

New Wings!

8 NEW FLAVORS!



CRISPY BONE-IN



BONELESS



TRADITIONAL

**954 Janesville Rd
608-835-5555**



FIVE BONELESS WINGS FREE!

***WITH ANY PIZZA PURCHASE!**

Carryout or Delivery. Limited delivery area. Delivery charge may apply. Minimum delivery order \$10. Valid through 10/24/13 at the Oregon Pizza Hut. © 2013 Pizza Hut, Inc. 14995



Photo by Jeremy Jones

Clockwise from top: A few items remain to be taken out of the Paulson estate on Jefferson Street as of Saturday; at right, Volunteers sort through a box of belongings at the Paulson Estate; bottom right: a child's piano as displayed at the Oregon Historical Museum.



Treasure: Paulson was a big help to the historical society long before she willed her estate

Continued from page 1

saved in the basement and attic of her home on Jefferson Street. They found historic artifacts, family treasures and sundry objects dating back to the time of Florice's grandparents and even great-grandparents.

"The house contains just massive amounts of stuff from three generations," Woodworth said. "It was a real time capsule."

Kind of overwhelming

Melanie and Doug Woodworth are both history buffs and former archaeologists. They compared going through the estate to a dig.

The group discovered rare first-print edition books dating back to the turn of the last century, and enough postcards, photographs and kids' toys in pristine condition to stock a museum.

They filled three Dumpsters but retained so many boxes of miscellaneous items that the Woodworths estimate it will take a year or two before they and other historical society volunteers can manage to investigate it all.

Melanie called it "a tremendous opportunity" for

the historical society, but also "kind of overwhelming."

"Because she did save everything, we found all kinds of Oregon memorabilia," she said. "We found some really extraordinary vintage books, stamps, political buttons, marbles, lots of vintage toys, all kinds of interesting linens, pottery and dishes and more dishes."

Much of what the Woodworths and others saved will go to an online auction in late October, with sales benefiting the historical society. And much of it will eventually make its way to a museum display.

The historical society folks first entered Paulson's home on Aug. 19 and determined they would have everything removed by Tuesday of this week. By then, Melanie estimated, the group collectively would have spent at least 400 hours in the effort.

"The timing was such that there were enough of us around that are retired and have the time to do this," she explained. "It was a massive effort, and we had to play beat the clock, but we had enough flexibility that we could comfortably be out by Oct. 15."

Sifting through the estate

'The house contains just massive amounts of stuff from three generations. It was a real time capsule.'

Melanie Woodworth,
Oregon History Museum coordinator

proved especially challenging because Paulson had been a heavy smoker throughout her entire adult life. Everything in the house was saturated with nicotine, dust and tobacco smoke.

The effect was so powerful that volunteers wore face masks and used air purifiers constantly. Some potential helpers had to decline once they entered the home.

"There was so much material that several people from our group worked just massive hours, and I ended up in the role of coordinating the project," Melanie said. "It was a matter of determining what do we take for the museum and what are we sending to auction? Then we had to determine what items go to donation and what goes in the Dumpster."

"She saved everything – just everything."

Rare books

Paulson was a big help to the historical society long before she willed her estate. In the late 1980s, she used part of an inheritance to buy an old lumber company building on Lincoln Street and donate it for a history museum.

OAHS members had no idea how extensive her collection was.

In addition to the kepi, she preserved other rare treasures such as first-print edition books.

The Woodworths have many of them at home and are researching their significance.

"A lot of these first editions aren't available any more," Melanie said.

Her husband called them "beyond extraordinary."

"There's one that was printed in 1902 and details a snowshoe trek from Northern Alberta to Alaska," he

said. "It's got about 23 Remington plates in it. Stuff like that. These books are just like they came off the press. They hardly were used. You open them up and they still creak."

They found a first edition of Theodore Roosevelt's trip to Africa with his son, Kermit, in 1910. Doug said he couldn't find it on any of the online old book sites.

Another rare book was written by a woman, Mrs. Cora Hatch, who was "kind of a spiritualist and an ingénue back in the late 1850s," Melanie explained. "She writes this book and her entrepreneurial husband publishes it."

In researching, the Woodworths learned that Hatch's book had been banned in various locations around the country and even burned in some places.

"But there's a copy at Florice's house," Melanie said. "The only other copy we could find is at the UW archives. You just don't find them out there. But researching on the web, you find that there's a whole website devoted to this woman. She's a very important figure to the spiritualists."

Out of curiosity, Melanie

emailed the people running the website to learn the value of the book.

"I got a strong response; everybody wants this book," she said. "We will keep some of the books, but in some cases we could raise some money for the historical society so some will be sold, probably on eBay."

They also found a guide to Egypt that was published in 1902 – 15 years before Florice was born.

"It's got 23 pristine foldout maps in it," Doug said. "People cut those maps out and sell them."

The historical society already listed the book on eBay, for \$375.

"People are watching, but nobody's taking," he said.

The group uncovered less profound books as well, including schoolbooks from when Paulson's grandparents were children.

Local connections

Much of what the historical society found has ties to Paulson's local kin – families with familiar names in the Oregon area: Paulson, Hanan, Tipple or Dank.

Turn to **Treasure**/Page 13



Photo by Jeremy Jones

Melanie Woodworth carries a box destined for the Oregon Historical Museum out of the Paulson estate on Saturday. A dumpster outside the home on Jefferson Street has also seen its fair share of trash as volunteers have spend near 400 hours emptying the house.



Photo by Jeremy Jones

Jerry Neath sorts through belongings in the garage at the Paulson estate.