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Gresham, Oregon 1905-2005

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Join the city of Gresham and our partners in 2005, when Oregon's fourth-largest city observes its 100th anniversary with a yearlong calendar of community-wide events to mark this historic occasion.

Everyone in Gresham and surrounding communities is invited to take part in the festivities. We hope you enjoy what we have planned. Many dedicated volunteers and sponsors, in partnership with the city of Gresham, have been working together for the past 14 months to plan the Gresham 100-Year Celebration, taking great care to ensure events and activities:

- Honor Gresham's past - The 100-Year Celebration will honor Gresham's history, while offering new opportunities to integrate future long-term goals.
- Share Gresham's story - The 100-Year Celebration will provide opportunities to share Gresham's illustrious history throughout the region and other contemporaries such as our Sister Cities.
- Launch future projects - The 100-Year Celebration will provide support for the future Gresham Center for the Arts, revitalize community planning initiatives and stimulate interest in projects to benefit future generations.
- Demonstrate community partnership - The Gresham 100-Year Celebration will showcase our community strength and civic pride through public/private sponsorships.

Visit www.ci.gresham.or.us/100-year for a complete listing of Gresham 100-Year Celebration events and activities.

Please join us in thanking our Gresham 100-Year Celebration sponsors for their generous participation and support!

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Planning for the Gresham 100-Year Celebration began almost two years ago, with the creation of the 100-Year Celebration Task Force. Please join us in thanking members for their leadership and commitment:

Shane Benis, Gresham City Council President, Chairman
Joe Anderson, Gresham Fire & Emergency Services
Rob Brading, Multnomah Community Television
Tam Driscoll, City of Gresham
Kathy Everett, Gresham Downtown Development Association
Pat Friedler, Toy Bear, Ltd
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Connie Otto, City of Gresham
Laurela Slavsky, Gresham Art Committee
Pat Stone, Gresham Historical Society
Athena Vadinis, Gresham-Barlow School District

Sponsor information provided by the city of Gresham on January 18, 2005
Citizens can join the birthday celebration

The year 2005 is a special one for our city. Therefore, in addition to wishing all Gresham residents a happy new year, it is a privilege for me to wish our community a happy 100th anniversary.

It is exciting to be a part of the Gresham 100-Year Celebration. Many dedicated volunteers and sponsors, in partnership with the city, have been working together the past 14 months to plan the best birthday ever—a year-long celebration with fun and meaningful events for everybody.

Did you know, before economic development such as Boeing and Gresham Station arrived, Gresham was a crossroads village with just four public buildings in 1884? It wasn’t until 1904 that the town elected its first mayor and city councilors. The village was incorporated on Feb. 11, 1905, by the 23rd Oregon legislative assembly and had a population of 365. The mayor and council changed our title from a town to the city of Gresham in 1921.

Gresham residents take tremendous pride in sharing their great sense of community. We are fortunate that our grandparents, parents, friends and neighbors have left us with a vibrant and meaningful legacy.

For instance, in 1906 John Metzger leased his property to the city for $1 a year so that the city could build at town hall, jail and firehouse. Now that’s community spirit. How about a local florist who in 1949 was driving through town and noticed that there were many places to plant petunias. They were concerned that Gresham would not be as beautiful as Stayton or Sheridan, so they gave away flowers for citizens to plant. More recently, the Gradin Sports Park has received almost $10 million dollars in donations. And, the land was donated, too.

The city was also the recipient of a land donation in historic downtown Gresham. This land will, in the near future, house the Center for the Arts. These are all amazing acts of generosity, and it speaks volumes of all of us as a community.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity during the Gresham 100-Year Celebration, and maybe even an obligation, to learn about where we’ve been and where we’re going. We have a duty to teach and instill in our children the same community values that we were so fortunate to learn. The more interested and involved citizens are in the wellbeing of Gresham, the more prosperous we’ll be.

My first job in Gresham, when I was a student at Gresham High School, was working downtown for Gordon Stone in his clothing store. A true community-minded and family-owned business, it was a gathering spot for community movers and shakers. Working downtown, surrounded by people in tune with their community, is where I learned my own sense of civic responsibility.

Different generations remember different things about Gresham’s history, and in planning the 100-Year Celebration, it has been fun to tie them together, whether it’s stories about picking berries after school or walking in the annual Teddy Bear Parade for the first time.

The biggest unsolved Gresham mystery to me and many others is: What happened to the Statue of Liberty? Long ago, Gresham businessmen chipped in to buy a replica of the Statue of Liberty from a traveling salesman. It stood on display at the fountain on the busy corner of Main Avenue near where Jazzy Bagels is now. Then it was taken down, stored and eventually disappeared. Throughout the years people have tried to find it. We still

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Citizens: Centennial events include gala and family day

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

get phone calls of potential sightings.

At the City Council meeting Tuesday, Jan. 4., a 12-by-9-foot rendering of a watercolor depicting that very busy corner where the Statue of Liberty stood was unveiled. This wonderful painting by Dr. Michael Hill recreates the scene from an old photo.

During our 100-Year Celebration there is a big weekend in February that I would like to see all Gresham residents take part in. Friday, Feb. 11, the very day our city was incorporated 100 years ago, an evening fund-raiser is scheduled at Persimmon Country Club. The Gresham 100-Year Gala is going to be a grand night of great food, live music, dancing and a show featuring Gresham through the decades.

The following day, Saturday, Feb. 12, 100-Year committee member Pat Fiedler and her team of volunteers has created a free family festival in historic downtown Gresham. Gresham Remembers: A 100-Year Celebration will have families enter into a time machine and arrive in early Gresham. There will be historic and interactive exhibits for children and adults. Trolley rides will transport people from the former JC Penney building downtown to more activities planned at the Gresham Library and Gresham History Museum. In addition to antique cars and entertainment, Margaret Eng of the Multnomah Education Service District is planning an old-time logging exhibit.

This will truly be a year for Gresham to remember. It’s not everyday a city celebrates its 100-year anniversary. Please join us and make the Gresham 100-Year Celebration a year that will go down in history as the biggest celebration our community has seen in 100 years and the next 100 to come.

Shane Bemis is a Gresham city councilor, council president and chairman of the 100-Year Committee. A full schedule of Gresham 100-Year Celebration activities is available online at www.ci.gresham.or.us/100-Year. General information, including how to volunteer or to participate as a sponsor, is available by calling the Gresham 100-Year phone line, 503-618-2100.

A message from the mayor

Incredible. We’re 100 years old this year. It makes me smile when I think about it — I wonder what it was like back then, with a horse and a chicken in most backyards and only one school. And for entertainment, maybe a trip downtown to the Gresham fairgrounds two or three times a year. With a population of just more than 300, they had clean air, open spaces, the city council met at Metzger’s Feed Store and my aunt told me “neighbors took care of neighbors.”

And here we are today, 94,000-plus citizens and counting.

Gresham is my town, my place, and where I want to be. My wife, Elaine, and I have lived here for 43 years; I can’t imagine living and raising a family anywhere else. Life is good for us, and we’ve been happy here. Right now, as mayor of Gresham, I participate in shaping our city and our future, sharing the vision of our leaders, hearing the ideas of our elected officials, but most important of all, listening to you.

I may be retired from my years as a professor at Portland State University, but I’m a long way from retiring in my job of taking care of this place — this town — these people. Not always as Gresham’s mayor, but bet on it, I’ll still be around taking care of business.

I hope you’ll join us and celebrate Gresham’s centennial birthday this year. Should be fun; let’s enjoy the party!

— Mayor Charles Becker

A message from the mayor

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GRESHAM 2005: TIME TO CELEBRATE

Many people helped make this history possible

It gets complicated when you give a town a birthday party. The first thing you have to figure out is when it was born. Was it when Jackson Powell arrived in Powell's Valley in 1854? When others followed him into Powell's Valley in 1852 and 1853? When the name Gresham first surfaced with the creation of the post office in 1884?

Do we count conception — when the idea of a town became a spark in the eye of city fathers? Or is the birth of a city the day the deed is signed, sealed and delivered?

Gresham founders voted to establish a bona fide, number one, genuinely incorporated town in 1904. But the incorporation papers didn't come through until February 1905. Most cities use incorporation dates because — hey, a town isn't really a town until it pays its taxes, right? So Gresham was a done deal in 1905.

By then the City Council had been meeting and doing stuff, electing a mayor, Lewis Shattuck, and passing laws, which, technically, nobody had to obey until the legal papers came through. Ordinance No. 1 on June 16, 1904, dealt with a bond for the treasurer, recorder and marshal of the town of Gresham. The second established the order of the council's business and after that they tackled "promiscuous shooting" of firecrackers and firearms, the running of large livestock through town, licensing of saloons and an ordinance providing for the taxing and killing of dogs that ran at large.

In 1904 Gresham was incorporated. The articles of incorporation provided for a mayor, a recorder, a treasurer, a marshal, and 6 councilmen. Those selected by a majority vote of the citizens were Lewis Shattuck, mayor; H. L. St. Clair, recorder; Joseph D. Regner, treasurer; Byron W. Emery, marshal. The six councilmen were George W. Kenney, Thomas R. Howell, Charles Merrill, John Conley, John H. Metzger, and Jacob G. Metzger. All excepting two of these officers — Lewis Shattuck of Vancouver, Wash., and Byron W. Emery of Gresham — have fallen asleep to awaken only to the Master's call.

The spidery handwriting was the pen and ink script of H.L. St. Clair, city recorder. The task fit neatly with his later job of publishing The Gresham Outlook. City Council news came straight from the horse's mouth, so to speak. Being publisher and recorder might have been a small conflict of interest, but people didn't worry about those things then. Steers, hogs and dogs running amok were much bigger problems. And saloons. You wouldn't want as many saloons as Troutdale had, nor siree. You could see the trouble that bung was getting into. On the other hand, you didn't want to be quite as pure as Fairview, which didn't have so much as a pool hall.

Gresham grew up to be a respectable town, starting in 1904 with 250 people and now, topping 90,000 souls, some of whom are so new they don't know the difference between Gresham and Troutdale.

A party is a good idea. We will tell Gresham's stories. We'll look at the old photos and remember. We'll think about the last 100 years and wonder how they got through the first 50 without Dea's hamburgers.

The Gresham Outlook's "A Century of Community"

And now, about this publication. Much of what appears in this, The Gresham Outlook's, "A Century of Community," comes from our own files and archives. The Outlook, established 1911, is one of Gresham's oldest businesses. We are proud of that, and have taken the liberty — never argue with people who buy ink by the barrel — of putting our history in this commemorative edition.

We have drawn on stories from our old newspapers and from a very messy accumulation of notes, interviews, historical tidbits, random conversations and trivia that has piled up on and around my desk since I came to work at The Outlook in 1968.

This publication — all you publishers and former publishers out there — is the reason I never cleaned my desk. What my excuse will be after this, I have no idea.

But this publication would not exist without the work of many others and the first thanks must go to the dedicated historians of the Gresham Historical Society, particularly Wink Chilton and his crew of writers who have published two volumes of Gresham history. Add to that Pat Stone and Utahna Kerr and the volunteers who have worked years to keep track of Gresham's memories and a trove of photos.

We also relied on two earlier Gresham historians, Mary Powell Mallett and Howard Archer, who published histories of the city.

Other information came from the Troutdale, Crown Point Country, Fairview Rockwood Wilkes, David Douglas and Oregon historical societies. We also borrowed on occasion from The Oregonian and from the old Oregon Journal. We used the works of Corbett historian Clarence Marshon, former Outlook reporter Anne Endicott, Rockwood writer Helen Greene, M. Hood Community College writers Sed and Betty Stuart, Irene Bradfield and William Murphy and George Miller, retired weather forecaster and author of two books on local weather.

Here at The Outlook, we pulled away from their regular jobs Dawn Wick, Flint Carlton, David Boehmke, Matthew Hunt, David Ball, Tiffany O'Dell, Janie Nafisinger and dumped extra loads on the rest of our staff to make this happen. Outlook Publisher Mark Garber has been a part of this project from the very beginning.

Readers can send us their own Gresham stories

We likely will not find all the errors in this publication and hope that you do and let us know. In surveying a 100 years, we've left some events and people out for any number of reasons. But as residents of 100-year-old Gresham, we give you the opportunity of making up for any oversights by writing your own Gresham stories and sending them to us, with photos for publication.

We will call it "Living in Gresham" and it will be your chance to tell the story of your family life here. For purposes of publication, please keep your story to about 1,500 words or less. Provide us with a couple pictures that we might use, give us a name, phone number and address so that we may work with you on printing your story.

In the meantime, read this with our thanks for being faithful readers for so many years and join us this year in celebrating Gresham's centennial birthday.

— Sharon Nesbit
Gresham Outlook
Feb. 5, 2005
1874-1905: Before The Beginning

It all started with two one-armed grocers

It was 120 years ago that two one-armed storekeepers set up shop in Gresham's first store. Just why one-armed Benjamin Franklin Rollins chose another one-armed fellow, James F. Roberts, as a partner is a mystery. Nor does history record what the first Greshamites thought of their matched set of merchants. But the pair launched their enterprise in 1884 at what is now the southeast corner of Main Avenue and Powell Boulevard.

It was then, Powell Valley Road. And Main Avenue was unheard of, though a track of sorts extended from there to Fairview and on to the Columbia River.

Rollins elected to build his store "at the bend of the (Johnson) creek near a point where the road from the Damascus country terminated at Powell Valley Road," wrote George W. Metzger in 1941.

The building was built of undressed fir planks 1-inch thick and 12-inches wide and stood on end to form the walls and battened with 3-inch battens. Eight feet of the south end was partitioned off for a bedroom and storage room. Shortly after the building was finished and a small stock of general merchandise placed therein, James Roberts of Portland, another one-armed man, joined his enterprise. It was then known as Roberts and Rollins General Merchandise: however a sign above the door and windows said in large letters, "grocery store."

G.W. Metzger — 1941

It was from that store that Gresham's name was derived. Reasoning that a post office would draw customers, Rollins applied to Postmaster General Walter Q. Gresham for a post office, craftily suggesting that such a post office would be named Gresham. The nation's postmaster general — though he never set foot in his namesake community — thought the name had a ring to it, and the request was approved. Gresham's post office was launched on May 15, 1884.

Other names suggested at that time were Metzger and Campground.

Campground actually existed for a brief period in 1884 from May 19 to June 19 until U.S. postal officials figured out that they had approved Gresham for the same site.

Historian Metzger calculated that there were 52 families within a 3-mile radius of the new Gresham in 1884. Portland had a total of 21,000, and it took all day to get from Gresham through cougar-infested woods to the city.

—

Gresham Centennial Comemorative Edition

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1874-1905: Before the Beginning

Benjamin Rollins is one of the individuals pictured in this 1892 Gresham scene.

Started: Pipeline meant growth

Continued from page 7

From those early beginnings, Gresham gradually began to grow, and other wooden store buildings popped up along Powell Valley Road. Nearby were two public buildings, a grange hall and a school building that also served as a church.

The combination was not all that successful, however. During long revival meetings “the children’s school books were molested,” and it was decided to raise money to build a church. That was Bethel Baptist Church, which stood in Main City Park awaiting restoration until 2004 when it was burned in an arson fire.

Gresham might have remained little more than a country crossroads, but in 1893 the first Bull Run pipeline came through town carrying water to thirsty Portlanders. Then, in 1903, the Portland-to-Estacada railroad pulled into Gresham.

Don Page was born in 1915 in what is now Main City Park. His father worked for the Portland Traction Company that built the railroad to Gresham. Page’s family lived in a railroad house near the streetcar station. “Nobody town ever locked a door,” he said in 1984.

Metzer’s history says that the first telephone was installed in 1894, a line put in by the Portland water bureau to contact the Bull Run headworks. Local residents could use it only in an emergency.

In 1902 the first public telephone was extended from Portland to the Gresham Drug Store, where the switchboard was installed. The first subscribers were wealthy W.W. Cotten, who owned a great deal of farmland west of the city, Dr. J.M. Short, the town physician, and the construction company building the railroad.

Virginia Christensen remembered the boardwalks at the Rexall Drug Store and working at the Gresham Berrygrower’s cannery where her job was to keep track of the 500 workers there.

.heady with progress, the city incorporated in 1904. With the papers arriving in February 1905, the centennial we mark today. Incorporation came a full two decades after Rollins built that first little store.

About the first thing the new city had to do was keep it from burning down. A disastrous fire in 1901 left much of Gresham in ashes. Another 1903 conflagration burned the Gresham Hotel and damaged other buildings. Deciding enough was enough, city fathers tapped into Portland’s Bull Run water line in 1910, founding a volunteer fire department. It was still not enough, and another sizeable chunk of Gresham burned in 1914.

In 1912, W.W. Cotten launched Gresham’s reputation as a berry-growing community by planting 50 acres of Cuthbert raspberries. A cannery was built soon after. It burned in 1916 but was swiftly rebuilt.

Gresham schools date from 1859 or 1860, when the first classes were held in a 10-by-15-foot shed. In 1915, a high school was opened. In 1908, Dr. J.M. Short was mayor of the city and saw Gresham blazing with electric light. By 1937, the city had its first sewer system.

By 1941, when George Metzer wrote his history of the city, Gresham’s population had soared to 54,340.
Churches helped define early Gresham

Methodist could be considered city's founding religion

Gresham's many churches would call for a publication of their own. This list, culled from Gresham Historical Society sources and Howard Archer's "Gresham ... the friendly city," is an attempt to sort out the pioneer churches that began in the community in the late 1880s and the early 1900s.

The Methodists

If Gresham had a founding religion, it would be Methodist.

The first Methodist circuit in Oregon and Washington was formed in 1853 with the result that Sunday schools were set up in pioneer settlements along the Vancouver, Cascades, The Dalles circuit. Among the first was in the home of E.R. Scott of Fairview in spring 1853, and by the following October, Dr. J.P. Powell was hosting a similar Sunday school — the forerunner of today's Gresham Methodist Church — in his pioneer home at what is now Gresham Station.

The campground that gave Gresham its start, a grove of trees approximately where Gresham's Glass Butterfly store

Gresham Methodist Episcopal Sunday School on parade in 1915.

is now, was also of Methodist persuasion. Howard Archer's history of Gresham says the campground was mentioned as early as 1858 and formalized in 1861. It was there where Gresham residents met, courted, camped and socialized at the annual camp meetings. The event continued until the grove of trees was toppled in a huge windstorm in 1880.

Gresham's Methodists first conducted services in what was called the "white school house," so named because it was the only building for miles with a total coat of white wash. A church was built in 1884 and later in 1905, a grander edifice which stood many years at the corner of

South Roberts and Powell.

Likely in the running as one of Gresham's oldest churches, the Methodists now meet at Northwest Eighth Street and Norman Avenue.

Rockwood United Methodist dates to 1878 when the Baseline Chapel was established. In 1918-1919 the old bluff chapel in Troutdale was moved to Rockwood to serve as a building. The church was located at its current site, 17805 S.E. Stark St., in 1959.

Pleasant Home United Methodist, though not technically in Gresham, has occupied the corner of Pleasant Home Road and Bluff Road since 1884 and with its cemetery claims true pioneer status.

The Baptists

David McLain organized the Bethel Baptist Church in 1882, though one early record of membership cites 1879. The little white church stood in one location or another until it burned in an arson fire in May 2004.

The best guess is that the building was constructed between 1882 and 1884. The Baptists reorganized themselves several times, Bethel Baptists, Missionary Baptists, German Baptists. The church was closed from 1907 to 1911 when the flock scattered, but the congregation

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Churche: Congregation switched to English during war

Continued from page 10

rebuilt itself to become the nucleus of what is today's Gresham Baptist Church on West Powell Boulevard, still at its historic location.

It is most closely linked to Gresham's 1884 Pioneer Cemetery, across the street from West Gresham Elementary School where the graves of most of the city's pioneers are buried.

The Catholics

Catholics met in a home and a school before the Kronenberg Mission Church was built in 1886 at Southeast 162nd Avenue and Powell Boulevard. Also called St. Joseph's Church, it was the closest Catholic church until 1913 when the first public services of St. Henry Catholic Church were held upstairs over Gresham Rexall Drug. The first St. Henry Catholic Church was completed in 1913, and in 1964, the new building on First Avenue was dedicated.

The old St. Joseph's or Kronenberg church was moved to 182nd Avenue, where it was renamed St. Anne.

The St. Joseph Cemetery on West Powell Boulevard is where many pioneer Catholic families are buried.

Zion United Church of Christ

In 1906, Gresham's German immigrants organized a church to meet the needs of German-speaking worshippers, first meeting in the Baptist church and later purchasing the old Methodist church for their needs.

The outbreak of World War I caused Gresham residents to view all things German with suspicion. German-born Greshamites hid or burned their pictures of the Kaiser. The Gresham Town Council demanded that the congregation conduct its services in English and fly the American flag.

Theodore Krug was head of the church. He argued quite rightly that the Constitution of the United States and the state of Oregon afforded them the privilege of freedom of speech and worship, but the church complied. By 1930, German services were held only at holidays.

Zion would build a Main Avenue landmark in 1931 at Fifth and Main that, when sold, served at various times as a restaurant, a bookstore and a coffee shop. The congregation meets at 2025 N.E. 25th, Gresham.

The Lutherans

The Swedish immigrants in Gresham saw to the organization of the Saron Lutheran Church (named for the Rose of Sharon), now Trinity Lutheran, in 1899 at the home of Peter Salquist.

They dedicated their first rural Powell Valley church in 1900, worshipping in Swedish until 1916. The congregation decided to move to Gresham in 1931, building at the corner of Ava Avenue and Powell Boulevard, where it remains.

Zarephath Kitchen, which feeds the poor at lunchtime every weekday, was launched by Trinity and is a function of the Lutherans as well as many other congregations that take turns preparing and serving meals.

Seventh-day Adventists

The first Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1910 was actually outside of Gresham at Gillis, a stop on the Mount Hood Line at Northeast 282nd Avenue and Orient Drive.

Merging with a congregation from Springdale, the two groups met in 1922 in Metzger's Funeral Parlor, ultimately building a church at Mignonette Avenue and Eight Street in Gresham in 1927. They built a new church on Juniper Avenue in 1951.

Powell Valley Mission

Covenant Church

The Swedes of Powell Valley, who established their congregation in 1890, built their first church in 1903 on 282nd Avenue. They worshipped in Swedish until 1908, then switched to English for the last service of each month. A new church was built in 1961.

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1874-1905: BEFORE THE BEGINNING

Local education began in the mid-1800s

On July 1, 1944, four school districts were united into a single Gresham-Barlow School District. The merger, mandated by the Legislature, absorbed the Barlow-Gresham Union High School District, Damascus-Union, Gresham Grade and Orient districts. It blurred the lines between the community schools and earlier districts that had served Gresham residents.

The idea was to simplify. Until 1950, Gresham only had one grade school. For a time, Centennial High was part of the Gresham Union High district. And once, briefly, the Gresham Grade School District had a high school. There used to be a lusted district, which was swallowed by Orient and then absorbed by Gresham-Barlow.

“Consolidation is nothing new,” Gresham historian Utahna Kerr said in 1994. “As roads got better and it became easier to get to school, the one-room schools came to an end.”

Now, the Gresham-Barlow School District is Oregon’s 10th largest district and counts 12,000 students in 19 schools.

The first Gresham school

Local education in Gresham began with Gresham District 4 and the construction in 1857 or 1858 of a 10-by-15-foot “camp shed,” a kind of one-sided shed located on the tract of land in Gresham known as Campground. Local schools had to be within walking distance. As scattered communities developed in the area, small schools cropped up at Limonemann Junction, Powell Valley and Cedar.

But West Gresham on Powell Boulevard would be the place where Gresham children received their grade school education for nearly a century. In 1859 or 1860, a small log schoolhouse was built with two tiny windows on each side. It became the woodshed when, in 1874, Gresham managed the White School House, so named because of its coat of whitewash, remarkable for the day. It was both a church and a school. The White School House lost a roof in the 1880 windstorm and two years later burned in a forest fire. It was counted as one of the four public buildings in Gresham in 1884.

In 1901, it was replaced by a grand three-story edifice in yellow, built by John Brown of Rockwood. It had two floors of classrooms, a full basement for rainy-day play and, from 1906 to 1915, a high school. Five students received diplomas in the 1908 graduation. The current West Gresham Grade School, the third to occupy the historic school site, was built in 1923 with 20 rooms. The big event remembered by many of its students was the May Day pageant.

Betty Peterson remembered it well. “There were always five May poles – Long, brightly-colored streamers, each manned by a child doing the typical pattern dances – to braid the streamers into a case around each pole.”

The children, Peterson wrote for the Gresham Historical Society, wore fanciful costumes. Her own butterfly wings were hanging in the attic storeroom when she went off to college.

East Gresham Grade School

Growth called for the construction of Gresham’s second grade school, East Gresham, in 1950. It was built outside the city limits to save money on the price of land. East Gresham pulled 381 upper grade students out of West Gresham and considerably eased crowding.

Centennial High School

Completed in 1960, just after the Oregon Centennial, Centennial was Gresham’s second high school until 1976 when the Centennial School District was created from two former elementary districts, Lynch and Pleasant Valley. The new district was named Centennial in honor of the nation’s bicentennial.

North Gresham Grade School

In 1960, North Gresham Grade School became the second school built outside of city limits on what was the Melvin Surface Nursery. This was Gresham’s first school with air conditioning. From there, students watched the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens.

Powell Valley Grade School

This school follows in the wake of the 1888 Powell Valley School where local Swedish families sent their children for education. The district consolidated with Gresham in 1961. The old two-story building was torn down, but a 1950s addition to the Powell Valley School was part of the new school occupied in 1964. In 1972, students funded and built the nation’s only banked speed skating track on the playground.

Dexter McCarty Middle School

Named for a principal of North Gresham who died in...
1874-1905: Before the Beginning

Schools: City’s third high school, Sam Barlow, built in 1968

Continued from page 12

1968, Dexter McCarty opened the same year on the site of a former “swamp” where Gresham residents used to hunt geese. McCarty began with seventh and eighth grades, but added sixth-grade in 1978.

Sam Barlow High School
Built in 1968 as Gresham’s third high school, the school was sited well east of Gresham on Southeast 302nd Avenue.

Highland Elementary School
Highland opened in 1971 just as the Gresham Grade School District went to a year-round school schedule to ease crowding. The site was purchased from the J. Frank Schmidt & Son nursery.

Gordon Russell Middle School
Named for a longtime district superintendent, who joked “he was not dead, yet,” Russell was Gresham’s second middle school when it was built in 1978 and eased crowding at Dexter McCarty, which had grown to 1,000 students. Russell, in turn, reached 1,000 before Clear Creek Middle School was built in 1994.

Hollydale Elementary School
Named for the famous Strong’s holly orchard that once occupied the land, Hollydale was opened in 1979. It was designed to promote a team approach to student learning and focused on encouraging volunteer help in the classroom.

Hall Elementary School
A twin to Hollydale, Hall opened in 1980 on the former Benjamin Hall donation land claim. Year-round school schedules were still in operation then in the grade school district.

Kelly Creek Elementary School
Built on a former berry farm, Kelly Creek, which opened in 1993, is named for the creek, which in turn was named for Gilmore Kelly, who came to Oregon in 1853. By coincidence, Principal Annie Painter was a descendant of the pioneer Kelly family.

Clear Creek Middle School
Gresham’s third middle school, built in 1993, is located near the city’s northern boundary.

The Orient Schools, West and East
The 1994 school consolidation brought the East and West Orient schools into the new district. The Orient district, founded in the 1850s, also included the old Lusted School. West Orient is now a middle school, and East Orient is the grade school.

Damascus Schools
Also brought into the fold in the 1994 consolidation is the district’s fifth middle school, once called Union School. The first Damascus school was built in 1876 and is now the Damascus Pioneer Craft School. The Union School District was organized in 1886, and its school on Southeast 222nd merged with Damascus in 1956. Deep Creek Elementary School was built in 1974.

Hogan Cedars Elementary School
In 2002, the district built Hogan Cedars, its 11th elementary school.

Springwater Trail High School
Springwater Trail High School was built in 2002.

Rockwood School District
Organized in 1902 and a separate district until 1976, the Reynolds School District now includes Rockwood elementary schools Alder, Davis and Hartley.

Centennial School District
Schools serving the Gresham area in the Centennial School District are Harold Oliver Intermediate School, Harold Oliver Primary School, Lynch Meadows, Lynch View, Lynch Wood and Pleasant Valley elementary schools, Centennial Learning Center, Centennial Middle School and Centennial High.

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Gresham took its name from a former general

Who was Walter Quintin Gresham? Benjamin Rollins proposed the name of Gresham, who was then postmaster general of the United States under President Chester Arthur, for the post office in his store in 1884. Though Gresham never set foot in his namesake town, he was, nevertheless, a worthy choice. Born in Indiana, he was a fatherless boy raised and educated in the requisite log cabin and had become a budding politician by the time the Civil War broke out. Denied a regimental command, he formed his own military company, served with Ulysses S. Grant and after the capture of Vicksburg, Miss., won the rank of brigadier general. At the battle of Peachtree Creek in Georgia, he was wounded in the knee and returned to his Indiana law practice on crutches. Though he failed in three bids for election to the House and Senate, Gresham got the postmaster general job in 1883, serving until 1889, and was briefly secretary of the treasury and later a U.S. circuit judge. Three times he considered a run for the presidency but died on May 28, 1895, while serving as secretary of state under President Grover Cleveland.

WALTER Q. GRESHAM

DISPATCHES FROM THE PAST

In 1901, a devastating fire swept through Gresham which laid much of it in ashes. As there was no fire department, Portland sent out some assistance. There was no Bull Run water at that time, and the only fire protection was a bucket brigade and two windmills. Ford Metzger’s and J.H. Metzger’s, yet the citizens did not seem to take the hint until the Gresham Hotel burned down in spring of 1903 and damaged and endangered nearby buildings.

— G.W. Metzger, 1941

Four years later another bank with stockholders was incorporated. Gresham Bank it was called. It went out of business in 1932.

— G.W. Metzger, 1941

On March 20, 1906, several local businessmen brought about the formation of the Multnomah and Clackamas County Mutual Telephone Company. On this date C.R. Keller started construction of a 10-party telephone line which was to serve his home and the homes or businesses of nine others.

The nine others on the line were E.J. Gradin, Emil Palmquist, John Palmquist, Simon Lind, P.A. Johnson, A.J. Stout, D.W. Metzger, James W. Lawrence and Arthur Doussett. H.D. Swashball was first president, A. Meyers treasurer, Arthur Doussett secretary, and J.R. Keller manager and lineman. Before a month had passed, there were 40 subscribers.

— G.W. Metzger, 1941
1906-1919: FOUNDATIONS OF A CITY

City still misses Statue of Liberty

Gresham residents have wished for years that they could find and restore the replica of the Statue of Liberty that once stood in the intersection of Main Avenue and Powell Boulevard.

Centennial celebration planners pored over the old photos of Liberty, which evokes the very image of small-town Gresham. Lady Liberty, proudly draped in flags and bunting, presided over the horse trough in mid-intersection of Gresham's busiest corner. She was the heart of the parades and the spirit of the shindigs that occurred there.

So who were the heartless fools who ripped her from her concrete pedestal and jackhammered the quaint old waterer trough into bits? It was the Gresham City Council, with a considerable assist from the Multnomah County Commissioners.

The Goddess of Liberty was doomed by a fit of public improvement and road widening 80 years ago and forced to make way for the right-of-way.

The Gresham Outlook played it for all it was worth, reporting in a 1924 headline: "Goddess of Liberty Abducted; Landmark Ruthlessly Wrecked."

When Multnomah County authorities decided to pave muddy, dusty Powell Boulevard in 1924, they convinced Gresham's city fathers that the eight-sided horse trough with the 8-1/2-foot statue on the top must go the way of the buggy whip.

The council was divided. Liberty had stood only six years, purchased in 1918 for $120 from a wandering Statue of Liberty salesman. Dedicated in May, she was in place in November, draped in star-spangled bunting and holding her electrical torch high as Gresham celebrated the armistice that ended World War I.

By 1924 as the paving crew threatened, Liberty had only a few friends. One of them was Outlook editor H.L. St. Clair, who wrote his tongue-in-cheek headline about the abduction of the statue. St. Clair chided city fathers about removing the landmark and suggested that the statue should be erected in some other place "where she can exert her patriotic influence and not be made a laughingstock by the traveling public."

At the very least, St. Clair continued, a petition should be circulated. Editorial belittling came to naught, as the editor would then have phrased it. A testy council met to determine the statue's fate. They were out of sorts that night and mad at folks who failed to build sidewalks. They were upset over the voters' failure to approve a bond issue to buy a new city park, and they were downright peevish about outhouses, described as "certain unsanitary institutions," many of them still in use less than a block from Main Avenue.

Liberty, they said, would be stored in a city warehouse, and no obstruction whatever would stand in the path of progress at Powell and Main.

Rumors abound, but no one knows what happened to the goddess after she was stashed away. A search in 1984 turned up nothing in the dark corners of the old public works building in Main City Park.

Her passing was mourned only by Editor St. Clair, who said that taking down the statue aroused "the ire of old-timers who think Gresham is going to the dogs."
Tales from Gresham's pioneers

Their names mark the landscape where they built new lives while surviving wild animals, windstorms and 14-mile walks to Portland to find work and supplies.

When Gresham incorporated itself as a city 100 years ago, the new town still had many of its first settlers. A new city council pondering the possibility of Gresham's first hard-surfaced street addressed constituents who arrived on rutted trails.

In 1919, Outlook writer Marian Dudley Eling sought the area's pioneer families to record first-person accounts from pioneers, or from their children, for the front pages of The Gresham Outlook.

Publisher/editor H.L. St. Clair observed that the interviews preserved "in permanent form the account of the experiences of the sturdy men and woman who laid the foundations...."

In many cases, they are the only first-person accounts we have. And the canny editor made sure to print extra copies, offering to mail them free to those who ordered new subscriptions.

The Bend of the Creek

Lacking road and place names — they would later give the roads and communities their own names — the early settlers interviewed by Eling referred to what is now Gresham town center at the curve of Johnson Creek as "the bend of the creek." Before Gresham was Gresham, a large grove of trees next to Johnson Creek marked the campground or camp meeting grounds.

The roads were mostly rough trails winding through trees and rumbling over roots, but two trails crossed at the bend of the creek to form Gresham. One would become Powell Boulevard, reaching from Portland through Linnemann Junction and wandering on east through the woods of Pleasant Home (sometimes called Egypt) and up into the Cascade Mountains. The other, Fairview-Damascus Road (223rd), ranibled from Fairview over Section Line (now Division) and Base Line (now Stark). In Gresham it became what is now Main Avenue and South Roberts and went on to Damascus.

Pioneer of 1851 Hannah Johnson, wife of Samuel Boone Johnson, rode her horse from Damascus down an "almost impassable bridle trail" (South Roberts Avenue) to attend camp meetings in the grove at Johnson Creek. On the way, she saw several black bears in the timber. Among those coming from the other direction near Troutdale were Capt. James Menzies and his family. A former sea captain and Indian agent, Menzies had a commanding presence that loomed large at the meetings.

Families from Oregon City, Portland, Boring, Damascus and from up the Sandy and down the Columbia rivers came for the two-week camp meeting. It was the social highlight of their year, a chance to meet and greet. Eling described the grove as centered at Powell Boulevard and Main Avenue. Likely it stretched several blocks west in to include the area around Gresham Pioneer Cemetery.

Eling said the first Gresham camp meeting was held in the fall of 1855. James Lynn Wilson, Father Archon Kelly and the Rev. Mr. Cornutt preached.

The stand of native Douglas firs was large enough to hold a number of private cabins which early settlers built to use during the two-week camp meeting — somewhat in the manner of today's vacation or second home. Others pitched tents among the trees.

Camp meetings were spiritual refueling, largely of the Methodist persuasion, filled with sermons and hymn singing. But they also provided an opportunity for people in the area to get together, renew friendships and do a little courting.

Wrote Eling: "At the annual gala occasion, the camp meeting, the (Stephen and Mary Ann) Roberts and (John P. and Sarah Ann) Wilson families shared the same cabin, many families following this custom of doubling up for the fortnight. At the camp meeting began the romance that culminated in the marriage of Ruth Wilson and John Roberts in 1872."

In 1919, when Eling interviewed Daniel Dunbar, pioneer of 1850, he relished the remembrance of the camp meetings and he and his wife riding on horseback to Gresham with their six children.

"Mr. Dunbar thinks that the conversions in the early days were more whole-hearted than the present-day variety," Eling wrote. "Those days were the happiest in their lives.

The Powells of Powells Valley

Traveling those early trails left a kind of glue that stuck the names of the pioneers to the landscape. In the beginning, the greater Gresham area was known in general terms as Powells Valley. The road to it was Powells Valley Road, later Powell Boulevard.

The name stuck because two different Powell families settled here. Jackson Powell made his claim in 1851 and his brother, James, in 1852. Two other brothers, David and John, settled in the Parkrose area. Also in 1852 came Dr. John Parker Powell, no direct relation to the other Powells, but the result was a passel of Powells in Powells Valley. Historians have a tricky time sorting them out. Safe to say that a letter simply addressed to Powell could have been delivered to most households.

Jackson Powell and his brothers set out for Oregon in 1847. Jackson and John Powell ended up in what is now Troutdale, where they spent the winter rolling logs from the mouth of the Sandy to the government sawmill at Vancouver, then part of Oregon Territory.

Jackson Powell joined the 49ers in the California Gold Rush, remaining there two years before returning to the area where in 1852 he staked one of the first claims in the Gresham area. He married Nancy Pugh in 1852, almost simultaneously with his 320-acre land claim.

Marriages in those days were often precipitated by a man's ability to double his claim if he had a wife. His brother, James, and his wife, Eliza, sister to Nancy Pugh, settled nearby. The marriage of two brothers to two sisters on more than 600 acres in what is now Gresham resulted in 15 children from the two families, all double first cousins. Many still lived in Powells Valley when the new city was incorporated.

The next Powells in the valley were Dr. John Parker Powell and his wife, Adaline, who traveled the Oregon trail in 1852, a year of heavy migration marked by water and forage shortages along the Oregon Trail. Worse, though, was "the cholera" — no one called it simply cholera. The disease, borne by contaminated water, and outbreaks of small pox haunted that year's migration. As a physician, Dr. John Parker Powell left his family alone on the trail to ride back as much as 50 miles or more to help a sick traveler.
“Dig your own well,” he counseled travelers, in an effort to keep the disease under control.

Powell, like many travelers, developed “mountain fever” on the last leg of the trip. At the Cascades on the Columbia River they left the train to recover. He then had to practice medicine there to pay what he regarded as an exorbitant bill for board and room.

The family went on to Portland but left there in the spring of 1853, seeking out David Powell (a brother to Jackson and John) in Parkrose and then moving to “the fine open country to the southeast,” where Dr. Powell took a claim close to where James Powell and another settler, Stephen Roberts, had located. Gresham Station is the site of Dr. Powell’s family home.

Dr. Powell gave the right of way and hired the men to clear the trail that is now Main Avenue.

He was the only physician in the valley and cared for three generations of his neighbors. He turned over his practice at the age of 70 to another doctor but lived until 1909, long enough to see Powells Valley become the town of Gresham.

Wild animals in the city limits

In 1919, Kate Stanley Harmon told Outlook reporter Marian Dudley Eling about her family’s arrival in Oregon from Texas in 1852. Following in the track of one-armed Page Stanley, Kate’s grandfather, the family came west. However, his son and Kate Stanley’s father, Harry, twice returned to Texas before finally settling in Oregon.

Page Stanley settled at 12-Mile Corner. He fashioned a leather forearm to replace the arm he lost in the Mexican wars and made a name for himself as a cabinetmaker and a beaver trapper.

One of Page Stanley’s bedsteads with rope springs and a couple of soft wool mattresses was a part of almost every cabin’s furniture,” Eling wrote.

The wool came from Harry Stanley’s sheep, likely the creatures that attracted all the wild animals.

Kate Stanley told Eling that she was a tiny girl sleeping in the center of the family’s first makeshift shelter when a “big yellow creature clawing at the bed covers” awakened her.

“She called to her daddy to drive off the dog and in the firelight she saw a great panther beside her,” Eling related. Harry Stanley shot the creature. Later he and three others came to the rescue of their children as they played with “kittens” on their way to school. The hunters killed the kittens and their mom, a 9-foot female cougar.

A bear met the same fate when he met Kate and her brother as they returned from the spring with a bucket of water. The bear stood on his hind legs and swiped a paw at little Kate, pulling the bonnet off her head.

Another bear grabbed the lunch pail of a child on the way to school.

In those days, small pockets of civilization were surrounded by vast expanses of wilderness. In the pioneer view, bears and cougars were varmints to be exterminated to make way for fields and livestock, and trees stood in the way of progress.

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Pioneers: Civil War concerns remained strong in Oregon

Getting rid of those pesky trees
The Linnemann and Giese families chose claims "into the woods" east of Gresham on Powells Valley Road at what is now 190th and Powell Boulevard.

They had an awful time getting to Oregon. Gerhardt (John) and Catharine Linnemann were German-born. A tailor, he left Germany ahead of her to establish a place in America. After two years of scrimping, he sent for Catharine. They were married in Shasta, Calif. The next year, 1852, they set out for the west. She hired on to take care of the children in the company, and he helped with the livestock.

Frightened of Indians, suffering from hunger and sickness, the Linnemanns moved on when others in the party stopped, traveling alone with a single man in a cart pulled by two oxen. When their travel companion sickened, they loaded him aboard the cart. When the oxen died, the Linnemanns walked the last 800 miles pulling the cart and their ailing traveler, who died just as they arrived in The Dalles. The young couple wound up in Portland in 1852 where work could be had by a tailor, and while there they adopted a baby orphaned on the Oregon Trail. She was Iona McLoughlin McColl, who was Gresham's postmaster for 18 years.

In the spring of 1853, the Linnemanns claimed 320 acres of dense woods at what is now Linnemann Junction and built a cabin. He quickly learned that the best way to get the trees off his land was to earn the money in Portland and pay others for the labor of clearing. Gerhardt Linnemann may have been Gresham's first commuter. walking to Portland on Monday, staying there during the week and coming home to his family on weekends.

Catharine Linnemann was not alone in the 12-by-12-foot cabin that marked their claim. Ernest and Eliza Giese, who came by boat across two oceans and the Isthmus of Panama, took an adjacent claim in the heavy cedar woods. The trees, mostly Western red cedar, gave rise to another community name of Cedarville.

Eling wrote: "There was no sweep of sunny valley then as there is now at Linnemann Junction. When the Gieses wished to see the sky, they looked straight up."

Fearing starvation in the deep woods, Ernest Giese joined Linnemann in working in Portland as a tailor, returning home, heavily loaded with provisions, over the Powell Valley trail on weekends.

The two tailors knew nothing of farming, and family members laughed for generations over a story about how they slaughtered their first hog. Stumped on just how to rid the animal of bristles, the two tailors finally lathered the dead pig and shaved it.

They did learn. Ernest Giese became famous for his apples, cider and vinegar, and the family was among the first to introduce filbert growing to the area.

The Linnemanns put their name on the station when the railroad was built through their property. Linnemann Junction is now marked by a replica station on the Springwater Trail. Grandma Linnemann was 91 and living in Gresham when she told her story to Marian Eling.

You almost can't get there from here
Clearing a farm was hard enough. Many pioneers cut the trees and farming around the massive stump. But those same old-growth forests made it hard to travel through the area.

When the Wilson family first found claims in the Beaver Bend, (Troutdale Road between Division and Stark streets), they spent two weeks carving a road through the timber. "It was not a straight road," noted Eling, "it just serpented around the cedars with their 6-foot diameters."

A surprising number of early residents walked the 14 miles to Portland and back again on Powells Valley Road, toting a lot of heavy stuff.

Mary Ann Roberts and her husband, Stephen, had a land claim where Micropchip Technologies Inc. is located. During those first lean years she went to work in Portland in hotels and rooming houses.

One day she saw a hotel man unloading a wagon of flour. She wished aloud that she might have a sack to feed her children at home.

"I'll give it to you if you will carry it home," he joked. She picked up a 50-pound sack and walked 14 miles to Gresham with the flour in her arms.

Eliza Giese and her daughters once a year made a bumpy trip by wagon to Portland to buy calico and muslin for dresses. Eliza Giese was a fine seamstress and arrived in Oregon with silk and satin and cashmere shawls, but sturdier stuff was needed for a pioneer household.

"On those infrequent shopping trips, one held on for dear life as the oxen and later the horses drew the wagon over the great roots in the crude roadway. Great trees, 6 feet across, barred the way. The ferry boat in Portland was paddled by two mules harnessed to a tread way."

The route to Portland on Powells Valley Road had only a few scattered households, including that of Father Kelly, who opened his house for travelers.

When he was in his late 70s, Daniel Dunbar often walked to Gresham from Fairview for a visit with his old friends, Grandma Linnemann among them.

The community in the Civil War
Distance from the eastern battlefield did not dim the concern in Oregon over the Civil War. The new settlers were fresh from their eastern homes. They had relatives fighting on both sides and a hunger for news.

They took sides early. Dr. John Parker Powell, born in North Carolina and raised in Kentucky, was from a slave state and had believed in slavery. "He became a Union man the day Fort Sumpter was fired upon, and through the war times of tense situations and strained feelings, he never lost an opportunity to avow his loyalty," wrote Eling.

When people were anxious for news of the battles, Mary Ann Roberts — the same woman who toted a 50-pound bag of flour home from Portland — often walked to Portland and brought back the news in The Oregonian. It cost a dollar a year, a gold dollar, the size of a thin dime.

Despite the slow arrival of war news, Ernest and Eliza Giese never doubted the outcome and to prove their faith in the union stitched a large American flag in preparation for a Union victory. When word came, passed from neighbor to neighbor, of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the Gieses sorrowfully raised their new flag to half-staff on their cedar flagpole. After the president's burial, they folded it away and did not fly it again.

Gresham's first high-tech and The Big Blow
In 1919 Marian Eling met 86-year-old Grandma (Maria) Sleret, who was wearing a pert hat and crisp little taffeta frock. Grandma Sleret had come to visit Gresham from Nampa, Idaho, where she lived with her son, George. But a solo train trip was nothing to a woman who drove a four-horse team through tribes of surly Indians in the second great emigration to the Northwest at the close of the Civil War.

The George Thomas Slerets and their five children picked a bad time to travel the Oregon Trail in 1865. Native Americans had begun to realize that there was no end to the trains of white settlers, and their mood ranged from peace to outright hostility. The Indian wars were in full cry. Soldiers at Fort Laramie rescued a woman and child who had been captives of the tribes for nine years. The Slerets viewed every Indian approach with suspicion, and even a simple trade, a shirt for a salmon, was regarded as enemy spying. In many stretches, they traveled with a military escort.

Once across the Snake River they stopped to nurse daughter, Mary, who was ill with mountain fever. They then chose their route over the mountains by way of the Barlow Road on the south bank of Mount Hood. By then it was late fall. With Mary Sleret desperately ill, they sought shelter and supplies at Summit House near...
Pioneers: Gresham hit hard by ‘Big Blow’ wind storm

Continued from page 18

Government Camp. While Maria Sleret made camp and nursed her child, George Sleret started for Portland to get medicine to save the girl’s life. The starving horses left in camp strayed into a patch of noxious weeds, which killed them in a few hours.

In Eling’s 1919 account, George Sleret returned to find his daughter dead and his prized horses gone. With only one horse, he sent his son, John, to Powell Valley looking for help. (Family accounts differ on when Mary died. Some think she may have died a short time later.)

In Gresham, the plight of the family aroused great sympathy. John Sleret, only 9 or 10 at the time, found a settler who sent ox wagons to rescue his family. People stood by the side of the road as the Slerets came to civilization handing out apples and supplies. And local residents were delighted to find that George Sleret was a blacksmith. Gresham needed a blacksmith.

In much the same way that the city later courted high tech, the pioneers of Powell Valley made it possible for George Sleret to stay. His smithy (built in 1865 on Powell between Walters and Towe) became a landmark on the wagon road between Portland and the Cascades. Their home became Halfway House, halfway between Portland and Revenue (Sandy) and a place for travelers to stay. It was a handy spot. Gresham had no post office then and no store, but the community mail was delivered there from Portland. Mrs. Sleret turned down the idea of a post office, leaving that to a schoolteacher whom they boarded, Ben Rollins.

About 1875, Rollins established the first store in Gresham. Two years later he opened a post office, naming it Gresham in a bald-faced move to attract the attention of then-Postmaster General Walter Quintin Gresham. Though a post office at the site had briefly been named Campground, postal authorities in Washington, D.C., quickly scrapped that name and established the Gresham Post Office on May 15, 1884.

The Campground blows away

On Jan. 9, 1880, Gresham’s forested Campground took a fierce hit from south winds in The Big Blow, a storm similar to the 1962 Columbus Day Storm.

Minnie Powell Clanahan, raised as one of those babies who were put to bed in a cabin at the old camp meetings, was by then a schoolteacher in the tiny school that first stood where West Gresham Grade School now is. The young woman, who had been “wakened in the campground by the lusty hymn-singing of the parents,” was a witness to the storm that blew down most of the camp meeting grove.

She held out in her tiny school near the campground until the boom of the falling trees became too fierce. As she dismissed classes and as the students left, a roof came sailing over their heads.

“They scurried up Powell to the Sleret blacksmith shop to find the roof of the shop gone,” Eling wrote. “There sat the smithy, George Sleret, the elder, on his anvil. He did not propose to have it follow the roof.”

Most early Gresham residents likely believed the storm was a blessing and did them the favor of clearing trees. By the 1880s, a small cluster of commerce took hold at the corner of Main and Powell, struggling east and west along Powell to include the smithy, the school, a church and a few tall fir trees, evidence of the original campgrounds where Gresham got its start.
Gresham's first inter-urban rail service pulled into town in 1903; eight decades later, light rail arrived

All aboard the electric train

Hear the names as the conductor called them out on the electric line to Gresham in 1903: Ruby Junctshuan ... Springwaaterrr ... Linneamnnnn ... Greshuuummm.

Some names exist mostly in memory: Russsevil ... Cahhhiiton ... Andersonnnn.

They are the ghosts of an interurban transportation system built shortly after the turn of the century. It was the first light rail, and when it came to Gresham, it jumpstarted the community.

The first tracks reached out from Portland to Gresham in 1903 and on to Boring and Estacada, where a power plant was being built to supply Portland with electricity. In the next 10 years, another rail line, the Mount Hood, extended through Gresham, Pleasant Home and Orient to Bull Run. An extension to Fairview and Troutdale resulted in a network carrying people and freight from East Multnomah and Clackamas counties to Portland.

By the same token, those early trains, called The Trout Route, carried Portland residents out to fish in the Sandy River or picnic at Cedarville or Dodge Park.

The first decade after the arrival of the railroad saw Gresham build a public library, a city hall, a public fountain and its first brick building, and make a connection to Bull Run water. Also, in those first 10 years, the city incorporated, established a telephone company, launched the Multnomah County fair and built a high school.

The "boom" period of the interurban lines peaked in 1912, but the system held on through 1930, fading as people switched to trucks and automobiles. Urban rail service enjoyed a brief resurgence during World War II, carrying Rosie the Riveter and her co-workers to the shipyards in Portland, but the passenger car's mournful last stop in Gresham was in 1949.

When the second light rail came to Gresham in 1986, some riders of the first rail system were still around to climb aboard the new MAX. The rebirth of a rail system renewed an old name along the tracks: Ruby Junctshuunn.

Exactly 100 years after the first train chugged into Gresham, the second light rail was carrying 48,000 passengers annually to Portland. Train systems started and ended the town's first century, with America's love for the automobile in the middle.

The first light rail

The arrival of the first train on Jan. 1, 1903, turned a hamlet into a town with the incorporation of Gresham only two years later.

"To be sure, the accommodations (of the train) were poor," wrote Lena St. Clair, wife of Outlook publisher, in 1913. "A dingy little car was used for passengers, and a wheezing construction engine was the motive power, but it was a promise of better things which came soon, and better than driving to Lents or Montavilla and taking the street car into the city. The first "depot" was a box car, sidetracked near the cemetery."

Gresham then had two churches, a new school house and "a cheap hotel and just enough business houses to satisfy the wants of the people if not too particular," observed Outlook editor in a 1912 retrospective.

The route of that first Oregon Water Power and Railway Company line (in 1906 it became Portland Railway Light and Power Company) is now the Springwater Trail, where runners, walkers and bicyclists work off steam. The rail line was laid out in 1902 to carry supplies for construction of a hydroelectric dam on the upper Clackamas River.

Other such lines in the Portland area had shown a profit by picking up freight and passengers along the way. The Springwater line began at First and Alder streets in Portland and terminated 54 stops later at Cazadero on the Clackamas River. The end of the line was named by a railroad official's wife who loved Spanish culture. Most stops were tiny stations that got their names from local settlers or the prominent families, Hogan, Anderson, Boring and Linneemann. Some, like Linneemann, Boring and Gresham, boasted depots.

Others were only flag stops where the train could be expected to halt if a willing passenger raised a hand.

The Springwater line was credited for launching three communities, Gresham, Boring and Estacada. Gresham, with about 200 citizens in 1903, was the largest town on the route. The railroad breathed life into a community at Boring, offering local residents a way to ship lumber and cordwood. The train made an astonishing difference to people who lived in Boring. A trip to Portland that took six hours by horse and buggy was reduced to an hour on the electric trolley.

Conversely, Portland residents who did not yet own many private vehicles rode the rail line to the country for Sunday picnic excursions. Sylvan parks were developed along the rail routes to meet the need, River Mill at Estacada and Dodge Park on the Sandy. Gresham's Cedarville Park — home now of Club Paisano at Southeast 190th Avenue and Powell Boulevard — was famous for picnics, dance parties and ice cream. The Linneemann Junction station was the last of the original depots to survive. Earmarked by the Gresham Historical Society for restoration, it burned in an arson-set fire on June 22, 1995, before the society could raise the funds to preserve it. A replica was built and dedicated in 2004.

In addition to historical displays and a small meeting room, Linneemann Junction II provides the first indoor toilet facility on the Springwater Trail.

Linneemann was key to the East County rail system. In 1906, Portland Railway Light and Power Company extended a branch north from Linneemann to Troutdale. And in 1908-1911, another rail system, the Mount Hood Line, extended from Portland, passing through Gresham with a depot at Northeast Eighth Street and Roberts Avenue. The Mount Hood Line headed east across the Sandy River at Dodge Park to the Bull Run power plant.

Originally intended to cross the Cascades, the Mount Hood Line ended at Bull Run. It intersected the Springwater line to Troutdale at Southeast 200th Avenue.
and Burnside Road, creating Ruby Junction, which was named for the nearby A.C. Ruby stock farm. Ruby Junction today is a MAX light rail operations facility.

The Mount Hood line added other names to the conductor’s rolling chorus: Gilllessss... Pleasant Hooooome... Mayherry.

The passage of the Mount Hood line was too good a deal to miss, and a goodly part of the community of Pleasant Home east of Gresham picked up and moved north from its original site on Bluff Road to the railroad. The railroad right-of-way is now Dodge Park Boulevard.

The Bull Run power plant was finished in 1911 and the total system unified under the management of Portland Railway Light and Power. The by-product of the passage of the trains to the dams was electricity. The Gresham City Council contracted with the power company for electricity in 1908.

“The fast interurbs that ran to Bull Run, Gresham, Estacada and Oregon City were not to be classed with the city trolleys,” wrote Gresham resident E.L. Meyer in 1986. “The interurban cars were much longer, probably two to three times heavier and ran on standard gauge track. They were equipped with cowcatchers (and) had shrill compressed air whistles, besides the foot bell. Some of the morning schedule cars had a baggage room for freight, such as milk cans, stacks of morning daily papers... small freight, grocery and store supplies. The seat backs were reversible, therefore the passengers always faced forward. The city trolley cars ran on narrow gauge.”

Many of the old-time citizens remembered, Meyer said, the third rail laid inside, alongside the track so that both narrow gauge and standard gauge cars could be used.

Meyer rode the interurban cars to high school in Gresham in 1922 for a student special rate of 18 cents a day for a round trip.

Gresham historian Wink Chilton observed that people could go to Portland for entertainment, and affluent Portlanders came east to build weekend and summer homes. Ambleside, a wooded glen on Johnson Creek, was the result of the latter kind of development, its weekenders catching the trolley at Hogan Station.

The end of the lines

Gresham, Jan. 5, 1917 - Lillie Luscher was killed and her sister, Rosalie, was injured when the Mitchell six car they were driving was hit at the crossing 700 feet west of Linnemann Junction by a westbound electric trolley. The girls were on their way to sing at a funeral in Pleasant Valley.

The presence of the railroad was not always a blessing. With the auto emerging as a transportation favorite, unguarded rail crossings resulted in frequent and tragic clashes between cars and trains.

A 1925 Gresham Outlook story, in reporting a crossing accident that claimed three members of a Fairview family, listed a series of similar tragedies from 1917 to 1925 that claimed 10 other lives. Perhaps the most painful event was the death of three Gresham educators at a rail crossing in 1921.

As more cars took to the roads, crossing accidents increased. There were 700 cars in Oregon in 1908, and only four years later, 10,000. By 1920, Oregonians owned 100,000 vehicles and five years later, 250,000.

Railroads were losing the race. The Troutdale line failed in 1927. The Mount Hood/Bull Run line closed in 1930. By 1935, the Springwater line beyond Boring ceased, and the last passenger train stopped at Gresham in 1949, though the rails would continue to carry freight for several more years.

As a market town, Gresham rebuilt itself for the car. Eisenhower-era freeways put Dad in a sedan for a commute to Portland from a ranch style with a double garage in East Multnomah County. Interstate 84 pushed east from Portland in the early 1950s.

About 1960, the idea of another eastbound freeway was floated. It would bypass Gresham on the south, funneling traffic from Portland and the Willamette Valley to Mount Hood. The Mount Hood freeway was intended to exit the Marquam Bridge in Southeast Portland and generally follow Powell Boulevard to 190th Avenue, where it would take a natural draw in the hills behind Gresham Butte, joining Highway 26 at a big sweeping curve east of Gresham. The section from Gresham to Sandy, Highway 26, was completed in 1968.

Hazel Wogberg, whose historic Gresham home stood in the path of the Portland-Mount Hood route, wrote in "Gresham, Stories of Our Past" that the plan was still very much alive in 1970. "When the freeway seemed to be coming to fruition, much opposition arose, and the populace came to the defense of the Hogan Cedar grove, (at Ambleside on Johnson Creek) which was in the construction path... A developer was set to begin erecting five houses to the acre on the Binford property in the path of the freeway... The state would have to reimburse him for the land and the new houses if the freeway were built."

The path of the freeway from the Marquam Bridge to Southeast 122nd Avenue was already there, money appropriated, houses purchased and moved, and a right-of-way in place. The Marquam was built with a Mount Hood Freeway ramp that sticks, like an amputated limb, off of the east end of the span. Among the cheerleaders for the Mount Hood Freeway was Outlook publisher Lee Irwin. When the battle was lost and freeway plans killed in 1978, Irwin regarded it as one of the great defeats of his career.

He was not alone. Many Gresham residents supported the freeway and thought it would be good for Gresham and good for business. Others worried that the freeway would carry Gresham business to Portland.

The Mount Hood Freeway was killed in the "freeway revolt" of the 1970s. A 1972 legislative strategy to improve air quality and a 1973-1974 OPEC oil embargo brought the nation's energy problem into focus and caused people to look more carefully at freeway construction. The loss of 1,500 homes and 200 businesses in the path of the freeway and a new regulation that allowed freeway money to be transferred to other transportation projects left an opening. Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt and Multnomah County Board Chairman Donald E. Clark took the opportunity and transferred the Mount Hood Freeway money to a Portland-Gresham light rail project and the widening of the Banfield (Interstate 84) Freeway. The freeway...
Train: East side voters understood value of light rail

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

died an official death in May 1976 when President Gerald Ford signed a highway assistance bill.

"Goldschmidt exchanged our freeway for light rail," says Gresham resident Ross Morgan. "He came out to talk to the Gresham businessmen, and they sat there and clapped as if he was the greatest man in the world. Milt Erickson and I were the only ones who ever said a word...

Now we are the fourth largest city in Oregon, the only one of this size in the whole U.S. that has no freeway at all."

The loss of the freeway, Morgan says, is reflected in the traffic on surface roads and the hassle over the Mount Hood Freeway, which would have carried north-south traffic from I-84 to Highway 26. That congestion, adds former Gresham Mayor Gussie McRobert, has caused some to talk of reviving the freeway.

"But I can tell you that the day Don Clark and Neil Goldschmidt made that little deal, Gresham became a second-rate market. Major department stores like Nordstrom don't go anywhere except to a freeway," said McRobert.

Anger over loss of the freeway, many urban planners believe, led Gresham to turn a cold shoulder to the light rail planning process. Though MAX entered Gresham on rail beds of the old Mount Hood line and could have gone right to old town Gresham, it skirted downtown and dead-ended at Cleveland Avenue.

"Gresham city leaders committed a major gaffe in not welcoming it into the city center," McRobert said.

"People come from all over the country to look at light rail, and I say, 'Come to Gresham and I'll show you how not to do it.' That's why it dead-ends on Cleveland. I'd have taken it to the college in a minute."

The irony was that Gresham's new suburbanites did not remember the old rail lines that once carried passengers and freight into town. They had lost the history of dairy farmers who left cans of fresh milk at the station to be transported to Portland. Or farmers who pulled cigars in the passenger cars on the way to jobs in the city.

The coming of the second light rail

Neil Goldschmidt, whose achievements were darkened in 2004 by revelations of a sexual relationship with a minor, was the first to toss out the idea of light rail in 1973. Though local politicians tried to save the Mount Hood Freeway by taking it to the voters, the transfer of $110 million in freeway money to a mass transit fund ended the highway project.

The first 15 miles of light rail would be built from Portland to the former county fairgrounds in Gresham at an estimated cost of $98 million.

Though an organization called East County Concerned Citizens opposed the project, light-rail, approved by the TriMet board in 1978, was tied to widening of the Banfield Freeway and moved ahead at a cost of $5.3 million a mile.

Outlook reporter Chuck Palahniuk, who would go on to become a best-selling writer of books such as "Fight Club" and "Lullaby," covered the opening of the light rail to Gresham on Sept. 5, 1986. The train was "fashionably late," wrote Palahniuk. It cost, in the end, $214 million.

Among the "unsung heroes" to get first rides were the residents of East Burnside in Rockwood who put up with months of inconvenience during the construction project.

On board the train was Portland Mayor Bud Clark, State Sen. Glenn Otto, who harbored reservations about the project, and Gov. Victor Atiyeh. The Gresham Hot Shots played their kazoos to welcome the train. Oregon Secretary of State Barbara Roberts, who would later become governor, said, "If there were decorations for accumulated battle scars over light rail, it would certainly make this day more colorful."

The week after MAX's debut, Neil Goldschmidt was back in town proposing a new north-south highway linking Highway 26 and Interstate 84 as part of his campaign for Oregon governor.

"People called it Whoops on Wheels," McRobert remembered. "Now you can't find anybody who is opposed to light rail except Don McIntire, who didn't like it then and doesn't like it now. He may be the only honest man in town."

But light rail grew on people, McRobert observed,

"Until the west side light rail passed, the east side section was an aberration, and developers/lenders wouldn't fund or build anything different than garden apartments and they didn't think it would influence commercial development. Once the west side passed, the state and Metro became interested in funding and planning development."

That brought projects such as Gresham's Civic Drive and Gresham Station.

East County voters understood the advantage of having a total light rail system instead of just an "east of Portland dead-end line" and voted in favor of west-side light rail expansion, she said. Light rail, McRobert said, was "an education all around."

"Now see what has happened," McRobert said.

MAX now operates 44 miles of light rail system that, experts say, eliminates 18.2 million car trips a year. About $2 billion in development has occurred along the east-side line, with $130.6 million of that in Gresham.

And some argue that the Cleveland route for light rail was a good choice, resulting as it did in the revitalization of Gresham's old canny district. New buildings on the line include Gresham City Hall, Alpha High School, a parking structure, the Gresham Station development and the East Multnomah County Services building.

The benefits of light rail extended well beyond the tracks, said McRobert, because construction prompted new infrastructure, replacing Depression-era pipes and other utilities.

"None of the new building in (downtown) Gresham would have happened without it," McRobert said.

Sources: Gresham Historical Society, Troutdale Historical Society, The Gresham Outlook, TriMet, and material written by Larry Barber, Miles Aubin and Tom Hatch.
City, family loses marshall in accident

City Marshal Crushed by 800-pound Safe. "The Outlook's" history column in 2003 recounted a Sept. 9, 1913, story of the death of Gresham City Marshal Henry Gullickson and sent his granddaughter, Patsy Gullickson Crouser, on a search for family mementos.

Crouser had always known how her grandfather died, but not the details. Details were the stock in trade for Outlook reporters in 1913. With no television or any ability to photograph scenes of disaster, reporters printed lines that make us squirm today.

Crouser did not know, for instance, that bystanders rushed to aid her grandfather when the safe he was unloading from a wagon in downtown Gresham slipped off the planks and crushed him against the sidewalk.

Gullickson was a big, rangy man — outdoor-tough, a fisherman and a hunter. Even an 800-pound safe couldn't kill him right away. The reporter wrote that Gullickson, 50, who had been marshal of Gresham for more than six years, was "almost instantly killed."

"Take this thing off of me," Gullickson told the people around him after the safe fell. They did. He rose to his hands and knees, "looked up into the faces of those present" and then fell over unconscious.

Dr. Bittner determined that nearly all of Gullickson's ribs were crushed by massive weight.

Clair Gullickson, the marshal's youngest son, was then about 8. He would later write on a scrap of paper with the fancy monogram "G" the date his father was crushed by the safe and the day he was buried in Gresham's Pioneer Cemetery.

A factual report that tried, but failed, to conceal the anguish in the simple sentences.

Beaver auto plant tries, and fails, to compete with Detroit

In 1914, the Beaver State Motor Company built an automobile manufacturing plant on the pioneer land claim of Dr. John Parker Powell, now Gresham Station.

Gresham, said P.A. Combs, president, would be the "Detroit of the West," and many Gresham residents jumped at the chance to join in the venture. Combs had a prototype of the Beaver Six automobile that he drove from Portland to the factory in Gresham, which was completed in March 1914.

The progress of the auto plant was subjected to breathless and frequent stories in The Gresham Outlook. It is likely that Publisher H.L. St. Clair, who fancied automobiles almost as much as he did horse racing, had an investment in the new plant.

By February 1915 the auto factory was ready to begin work, the paper reported. In April two engines had been cast and maybe four Beaver Six vehicles were made by the Gresham plant.

six men were employed. But in 1915 the company began manufacturing drag saws. Supposedly in 1916, it was at work on 1917 models of the Beaver automobile, but there was concern that war in Europe would hinder the ability to get supplies. In 1916, the company disappeared from the newspaper pages and sometime around 1918 went bankrupt.

Gresham historian Neil Dale conjectured that one Beaver Six was built for sure and possibly three others, but no one knows what happened to the vehicle or vehicles, and its record rests in a picture in The Gresham Outlook.

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Fire of 1914 deemed a city ‘catastrophe’

All over Gresham, folks were getting gussied up in anticipation of the opening of Regner’s opera house on Christmas night 1914.

The gala opening ball would give Gresham’s movers and shakers a first look at the maple dance floor, the stage with drop curtains and the “superb” upholstered wall seating, should there be any wallflowers at the new hall at the corner of Second Street and Main Avenue.

“Unusually fine dining and restrooms,” The Outlook bragged of the separate facilities for the sexes. The stories of the gentlemen would not annoy the delicate sensibilities of the ladies.

The new brick and plaster building was heated to comfortable temperatures during the day. Then the stoves were removed in the belief that the structure would retain its heat through the evening. Hopefully, Gresham’s citizens would generate a little heat of their own during the dance, though only of the purest form. No one smelling of liquor would be allowed to enter the Christmas ball.

But heat and smoke of a different kind nearly ruined the evening.

Five days before the dance, at 3 a.m. Dec. 20, 1914, with the temperature at a frigid 24 degrees, a sheet-iron stove in the nearby Shattuck building, home of Bartelt Mercantile Co., collapsed, spewing glowing coals across the floor.

A fire on Dec. 20, 1914, was the third in 13 years. It spared the new Regner opera house, which now houses Amilton Furniture, left.

The ensuing blaze, called Gresham’s “greatest catastrophe,” was the third fire in 13 years in the city. It burned seven businesses, a residence and a barn for a total loss in those days of $40,000.

The Shattuck building on Main Avenue was the largest store building in Multnomah and Clackamas counties. Sales sometimes topped $15,000 a month, and business was expected to pick up as soon as shipment of merchandise started coming through the new Panama Canal, which had opened in August.

The previous spring, Lewis Shattuck, who served as Gresham’s first mayor, sold out, and it was a frantic and helpless John Bartelt who found himself trapped on the top floor of the burning building.

Clutching an adding machine and a typewriter (in those days both of those items were heavy enough to serve as anchors) and grabbing some clothing, Bartelt was helped to the ground by Gresham firefighters. They had been summoned by Bert Lindsey, who was the first to spot the blaze. Pulling on his pants as he ran, Lindsey sped barefoot through the cold to sound the alarm at city hall.

The villain, as usual, was the East Wind. It spread flames across the street to six other businesses. T.J. Halligan managed to save two chairs from his barber shop. A horse and buggy were rescued from Adolph Tietze’s meat market. S.E. Palmquist salvaged some of his harness equipment and set up shop in a building formerly occupied by The Outlook. J.C. Hessel’s farm machinery business suffered a $4,000 loss, and blacksmith C.E. Osburn was out $6,000.

Engine No. 9 from Portland arrived in time to save the Congdon Hotel. Fire hydrants supplied 207,000 gallons of water, which formed mounds of ice in the gutters.

“Gresham has a good little fire department,” said Capt. Hanson of the Portland Fire Department, “but the East Wind was too strong for them. We had plenty of water, but the buildings were too close together.”

The next day the Gresham City Council created a fire zone in the downtown district, banning wooden frame construction.

First printed in The Outlook, March 4, 1989.
1920-1929: NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE

Making a home in Rockwood

Rockwood is home. Others may worry about the community’s apartments, its crime rate and the traffic, but Gerald and Doris Haynes have Rockwood roots too deep to be disturbed.

Gerald Haynes, who came to Rockwood in 1919, is 94 and a longtime Rockwood entrepreneur, beginning with his Portland Telegram paper route when he was a kid. He began his real estate investments shortly after World War II, buying up foreclosed lots to build 70 starter houses at $2,500 each for new families of the baby boom.

Haynes and Doris, 85, a former tap dancer in the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair who performs with the Gresham Senior Hotshots, live in a quiet house on a busy thoroughfare with 10 acres out back.

Gerald didn’t get around to marrying until he was 64. He enjoys telling the story of another single woman in the area who owned 6 acres, “but Doris had 10, so I married her.”

Doris and her first husband, Bob Robbins, came to Rockwood in 1946, first buying 6 acres at the corner of 190th and Stark Street. The property had a small log cabin and deep woods out back. “No bathroom,” she remembers, “and a hammock for a bed. We had two babies, and I did the best I could.”

Gerald has a memory sharp as a laser print. He came to the area in 1919 with his father, optometrist Dr. C.L. Haynes, and mother, Sally, moving into a home at 183rd Avenue and Yamhill Street. His father commuted to an office in downtown Portland on the trolley. With no trouble at all, Gerald takes a mental trip up and down Stark Street (formerly Base Line Road), naming all the roadhouses, moonshiners, houses of ill repute, dinner houses, stores and a line of comely chorus girls who lived along the thoroughfare.

Gerald relished the street’s slightly seamy reputation, but as a lifelong non-drinker, non-smoking Methodist, he did not partake. From his paperboy days, he remembers Birdleg Reed, a black man, who served “the best fried chicken,” but, so the story goes, went blind drinking his own moonshine.

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1920-1929: Neighborhood Pride

Community clustered at 181st and Stark

Helen Lamb Greene moved to Rockwood with her parents in 1918 when Glisan Street was just a wagon road and Burnside Road was the streetcar line.

"They took it out, and then they put it back in the same place 60 years later. Isn't that strange?" she said in a 1988 interview.

Greene, who wrote a little book on the history of Rockwood, graduated from Rockwood Grade School and rode that train to Portland to attend Washington High School. A year later, in 1928, when the streetcar quit running, her father went to the bank, withdrew $500 and bought a new Ford touring car for his daughter to drive to school.

"I had never driven," she remembered. "But I got a special permit to drive at age 15 and took all my friends to school and back."

The Rockwood she remembered in those days was clustered around the intersection of 181st Avenue and Stark Street. It included Sam Bliss' blacksmith shop where the Rockwood library is now, a general store, a lodge hall, the Rockwood Methodist Church, a grange hall, the school and another general store.

Greene played piano in a little jazz band that was the hit of grange hall dances, but she also remembered the seamier side of Rockwood as a "speakeasy heaven."

At 75, she could recall the various establishments on Base Line Road (now Stark Street) where music played and illegal liquor flowed during Prohibition.

At Southeast 162nd Avenue was Jack and Jill's Tavern, a dance and dance, that was described as "a swanky place."

At the site of the present Drake's 7 Dees nursery, the Beacon Lodge offered chicken dinners, dancing and "rooms afterward."

At 179th Avenue and Stark Street, was the 10-Mile Roadhouse and coach stop.

At 184th Avenue was A.G. Tulley's roadhouse and speakeasy and then Birdleg Reed's Roadhouse. Birdleg Reed was one of the area's few black residents, she recalled, "and was a fine cook. He loved things out of our gardens and would pay cash for everyone's excess produce."

At Stark Street and 20th Avenue was the restaurant of El Porvenir, later the ranch of C.A. Butcher.

And, at 12-Mile corner on 223rd Avenue, 12-Mile House.

Regardless of its racy reputation, Greene said Rockwood was a pleasant neighborhood where "you were part of everything that went on. The Catholic ladies, the Methodist ladies and the Lutheran women all went to the same Ladies Aid in those days. It was only later when they got a lot of different churches that they broke up."

Greene met her husband, Herman or "Red," at a dance and married him in 1933. They raised roses on the site of what is now the Albertson's distribution center and patented the Centennial Sweetheart Rose in 1959. In 1962, they sold their Rockwood property and retired in Damascus, where she wrote her 1992 book "From Circuit Riders to Speakeasies."

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1920-1929: NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE

Soda fountain drew a hot crowd

What's the scoop at Rexall? Chocolate or vanilla? Paulette Ewalt scooped her share of chocolate, strawberry and vanilla during the summers of the late 1920s when she worked at her uncle Arthur Dowsett's Rexall Drug Store at the corner of Main Avenue and Powell Boulevard.

On hot days we did a terrific fountain business," she told Outlook reporter Tom Fluharty in 1980. On a really hot Fourth of July, drug store employees would stay until 11 p.m. dipping ice cream and making milkshakes.

"I think I was the envy of the younger generation," Ewalt said. "Jobs were pretty scarce, and that was a lot better than picking berries." She earned 25 cents an hour working afternoon and evening shifts.

Ice cream was more of a treat then, she said. It wasn't something every house had in the deep freeze. One advantage to working in the local soda fountain was that Ewalt could have all she wanted. "I really didn't crave it after dishing it out all day," she said.

The ice cream was brought to Gresham by train, and buyers had to drive to the Gresham depot to pick it up. The frozen treat was carried back to the drug store on the running board of the car. Every night the ice cream had to be packed in ice and salt to keep it frozen.

"One week it would be so soft you wouldn't want to dip it. The next week it would be so hard you couldn't dip it. It just depended on who closed up," she said.

She remembered regulars at the drug store — the bus driver who came in precisely at 3:50 p.m. to order a chocolate milkshake, the guys from the lumberyard who came in for a daily milkshake.

But it was no "Happy Days" hangout for the younger set in the 1920s. "We didn't do that sort of thing," Ewalt said of her generation. "When they got through with school, they had to go home and work on the farm."

Sorry, no dancing allowed at school, at least until 1939

In 1925, the Gresham High School board, at the request of students who wanted to cut a rug, took up the question of dancing on school premises.

"If there had been any doubt before in the minds of the members of the school board ... in regard to the advisability of allowing dancing to be held in the high school gymnasium ... that doubt must have been forcibly eradicated from their minds Thursday evening," reported The Outlook. A delegation of five ministers and several ladies appeared before the board objecting to dancing as part of the school's recreational activities. High school students had circulated a petition asking for permission for such dances.

The Rev. Andrew Johnson, pastor of the Haley Baptist Church, objected to dancing on the grounds that it was conducive to immorality, that it would undermine the health of students and would not be conducive to good schoolwork. Other arguments from ministers were that dancing was a relic of "heathenism and paganism."

Things changed in 1939. "It was my high school graduating class that asked for and got a senior prom," remembers Bonnie Townsend Irwin. "The churches were very against dancing, but shy me helped persuade the school board to allow such an event. I don't remember if it was fun or not, but I do remember a feeling of success with the outcome of our discussions with the school board."

One of last pioneers felt loss of fertile soil

Elsie Chiodo, who died in 2004, was among the last of Gresham's pioneer farmers — those who farmed in what is now the city limits. It was a major frustration of her old age that the soil they're (covering) up now is the most fertile in the state."

She was Elsie Kuhnhausen in 1927 when she wed Felix Chiodo, son of James Chiodo, who came to Gresham to farm in 1899. It was a mixed marriage in those days with Elsie, a Lutheran of German descent, and Felix, an Italian Catholic, but the marriage lasted 60 years until his death in 1987. The two were musicians who performed at dances in the area, he on the accordion and she on the ukulele.

The way the family legend goes, Felix planted a small field in strawberries when he was 17 and set a few on a plank in front of his parents' home on Powell Valley Road just west of Gresham. For the next 70 years he operated a roadside vegetable stand that was a landmark on Powell. Elsie was one of the feistiest readers of The Gresham Outlook, often canceling her subscription when a story made her mad, and then being lured back when she was curious about a local event.
1920-1929: Facts and Artifacts

Independence Day, 1924
Children including Jean Botkin, Roberta Kidder, Jean Elkington, Cleo McMurray, Marj Aylsworth, Laura Todt, Lenore Inglis and Peggy Ott on the Aylsworth and Martin Fourth of July float in 1924.

A heating system — for $9.50
Right: An ad from the early years of The Gresham Outlook touts a woodstove made especially for this area’s climate.

Historical Sideneote: KKK Infiltrated Area
1924: The Rev. Chas R. Mathis spoke at the Gresham fairgrounds 80 years ago on the value of the Ku Klux Klan, which had already established a “klanion” in the East Multnomah County area. Kleagle Donald G. Fraser introduced the speaker, who explained that local klansmen came from an area between Buckley Avenue (122nd) and the Cascade Range and from the Columbia River to Barton. He paid tribute to the Stars and Stripes and offered bland application forms to all who attended.

The 1924 Outlook unfortunately did not condemn the group, reporting instead that, “Mr. Mathis’ lecture was a thoroughly patriotic, pro-American, pro-Protestant, pro-white race speech. He emphasized strict law enforcement, support of the free public school system, absolute separation of church and state and restriction of immigration.”

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1930-1939: Survival in Tough Times

Burton Walrad, 'Mr. Gresham'

Burton Walrad, known as “Mr. Gresham,” came to Gresham with his family in 1912 and made his mark in the community until his death in 1990 at the age of 88.

The founder of Walrad Insurance and Gresham Transfer, he bought his first real estate at the age of 12 with profits realized from a paper route and his milk cow.

He was the first president of the Gresham Chamber of Commerce, a charter member of the Gresham Kiwanis, an organizer of fire districts, a city fire and police commissioner and Gresham’s chief booster.

In 1933, after Gresham’s two banks failed in the Depression, Walrad and fellow members of the newly organized chamber lured First National Bank to Gresham. It was a considerable coup. E.B. MacNaughton, president of First National, warned the Gresham promoters that branch banking was not yet legal.

“We told him we do so many dang things that weren’t legal in Gresham, we could care less,” Walrad said in an Outlook interview.

Walrad was raised in eastern Washington, where he claimed there were two seasons, July and August and winter. His father, Burton Walrad Sr., bought a general store on Main Avenue in Gresham, a city the younger Walrad would ever after call “God’s country.”

“Until we came to Gresham, I didn’t even know about store-bought underwear. My mother made all ours from Apple Brand flour sacks,” he said in 1980.

Walrad bought his first chunk of God’s country, a corner lot at A Avenue and First Street, for $50 down and $10 a month when he was a kid. At 19, it cost him 50 cents to file the name of Gresham Transfer Company at the Multnomah County Courthouse, and he made a $165 down payment on a Model T Ford truck.

He made local deliveries during the day, but found there was another $60 to be earned in a night run with a load of fruit to The Dalles over the old Columbia River Highway.

“I’d stop at Horsetail Falls and dip my wool shirt in the water. It helped keep me awake. When I got to The Dalles, I’d back the truck into the loading dock, drop over the wheel and sleep like I was dead until the truck was unloaded. You know, I can’t stay up all night like I used to,” he said in his old age.

He sold Gresham Transfer when his fleet of trucks grew to six vehicles and turned to the insurance business, where he worked 49 years. He insured nearly every school district in the area.

During World War II he was pressed into service as a Multnomah County sheriff’s deputy. He outfitted his own car with lights and siren and conducted insurance business on the side.

Until he and others organized the Gresham Chamber in 1931, he remembered that the only time Gresham businessmen got together was in midwinter to shovel snow off the street.

Walrad married LaVerne Caffee in 1926. Together, they launched a private collection of The Gresham Outlook, which was eventually bound and donated to Mt. Hood Community College.
Clarence True Wilson, described as “Gresham’s most famous citizen of all time,” came back to Gresham to retire in 1936.

Certainly no one else in Gresham could number among his friends the famed Clarence Darrow, criminal lawyer and social reformer. Darrow became famous in films and plays for his arguments in favor of intellectual freedom and evolution at the Scopes “monkey trial” over the teaching of evolution. Hardly anyone remembers Wilson, the great crusader against alcohol.

A Methodist minister, Clarence True Wilson won a stunning victory in 1919 when the nation ratified an amendment to ban booze. When “The Great Experiment” in prohibition failed and the 18th Amendment was repealed in 1933, Wilson came back to Gresham to live, an exhausted and disappointed man. He died on Feb. 16, 1939.

The problems he tried to fix by ending the sale of alcohol in the United States are still part of a national health crisis, but Wilson is all but forgotten.

There was a time when his crusade was flying high. Gresham resident Roy J. Beadle, a retired Oregon Journal reporter, worked for The Gresham Outlook in 1936 and 1937. He interviewed Wilson that year and remembered a remarkable fact: “The one thing that comes clearly to mind was his description of a strong personal friendship with Clarence Darrow, the famous criminal lawyer. The two traveled together by train and debated Prohibition in city after city. Their strongly clashing views on this and other issues did not stand in the way of their friendship.”

Wilson’s biographer, the Rev. Bob D. McNeil, former director of the Oregon Council on Alcohol Problems, was fascinated by a man who could hold such strong views yet befriend his opponent.

Wilson, born in Milton, Del., in 1872, became a “boy preacher” at the age of 20. He came to Oregon in 1905 and married Maude Aikin Tift, whose first marriage ended because of her husband’s uncontrolled drinking. The couple had two daughters, Virginia and Maribeth.

Maribeth Collins is a well-known Portland philanthropist and head of the Collins Foundation.

During his stint in Oregon, Wilson led a campaign to close saloons in four-fifths of Oregon’s counties. In Oregon, he polished his debating skills, then left the state to campaign at a national level. By 1916, he headed the Methodist Church’s board on temperance, prohibition and public morals in Washington, D.C.

He won the nation to his cause with prolific writing and speeches. Billed as “America’s Number One Dry,” he held his audience spellbound for two hours at a time. In 10 years, he spoke on average 1,000 times a year.

An Oregon Journal reporter of the day described Wilson as impressive “with his white hair, his silken goatee and sharp blue eyes.”

Wilson claimed victory for a time, but when Prohibition failed, drowned in a flood of illegal moonshine, bootleg whiskey and bathtub gin, he was worn out and retired to his home on Heiney Road near Gresham.

In his last years he devoted his time to his hobbies, livestock breeding and the propagation of the theory that John Wilkes Booth, Abraham Lincoln’s assassin, escaped the soldiers sent to kill him and died an old man under an assumed name.
1930-1939: SURVIVAL IN TOUGH TIMES

Matriarch focused on positives

In an Outlook interview in 1990, Mildred Pullen Fancher Hodges, matriarch of a Gresham pioneer business, could have dwelt on hardship and tragedy. The hardship of a struggling family in the Depression. The loss of her husband, who vanished in his private airplane in 1947, leaving her with a business to run.

Instead, she talked about love and good fortune. “I have had two husbands and both of them darlings,” she said in 1990 of her 25-year marriage to Galen (Porky) Fancher, and her second marriage — 50 years this year — with Byron Hodges.

Though supplies were often scarce, Mildred Hodges lived on love. She once told of a home in Gresham so small that her husband rigged one light to serve both rooms. “That shows you what love does,” she said.

Now slowed by advancing age, Mildred Hodges was 87 when she was recognized for nearly two decades of volunteer work. At 70, she cut back her work hours at Fancher Auto Parts, a business she and her husband founded in 1939, and gave her time to causes. She sacked groceries at Sprow-CAP, worked at Gresham United Methodist Church, sold resale goods in a shop for various jobs. In the winter of 1923 they lived in a tent near Grants Pass. After the birth of their first son, they shared two rooms in the post office in Spray with her brother. They had managed to buy a $1,000 home in Gresham when the banks went broke, and they lost everything except the cash she had buried in a pint fruit jar in the basement.

By 1931 they were back to a tent and then in an old garage in Huntington, where they used a service station toilet as a bathroom. Bonneville Dam saved them. They moved to Cascade Locks, established a bus line and in 1939 when the dam was completed, returned to Gresham and mortgaged everything to start Fancher Auto Parts.

They were prospering in 1947 when Galen Fancher vanished, likely in the ocean, while flying his private plane to Seattle. The huge search turned up two other missing planes, but no trace of Fancher was ever found.

She and her two sons kept the business going. Three years later she married Yve Hodges, who sold his own business to join hers. The couple and the Fancher sons and grandchildren continued the family business.

They were honored in 1991 by the Gresham Historical Society as a Gresham historic business. Mildred Fancher Hodges accepted the award surrounded by the people she loved. She died in 2004 at the age of 101. Her husband, Yve, died a few months after.

Bucket of Blood served Nehi and near beer

In 1991, Dan Murphy, then 72, wrote a story about his father's Gresham saloon for The Gresham Outlook. Afraid of writing in the first person, Murphy is the kid in this story excerpted from the 1991 account.

Nobody can remember how Murphy's Bucket of Blood got its name, but it was the only pub in Gresham in the 1930s. It was purchased by Dan Murphy in about 1926 from Kenneth Roberts. Murphy was a crusty old Irishman, and he ran a tight ship. Prohibition still existed, but he never allowed any moonshine or home brew to be brought onto the premises. For entertainment, there were two pool tables and a snooker table.

Card playing was popular, but the winner never received any cash. Instead they were paid “hickies,” aluminum coins about the size of a nickel that said “Murphy” on one side and the other read, “Good for 5 cents in trade.” They could be converted to cash, but it took three hickies to equal a dime.

The local watering hole in those Prohibition days dispensed soft drinks and near beer, real beer that had the alcohol removed at the brewery with the result that it lacked flavor and tasted flat. Murphy had a young son, who worked as a “go-fer” and who was somewhat scatter-brained but reasonably dependable. He was a good source of free labor, and his old man didn’t hesitate to use him to do errands.

The Great Depression descended in October 1929, and the economy in Gresham tightened up. The pub still made money, primarily because Murphy spent very little on operating costs. But he worked long hours. The pub was open seven days a week, including holidays. He had a man open up at 8 a.m. and work until noon. Then Murphy came to work and spent 12 hours on the job, closing at midnight. For his dinner at 6 p.m., when business came to a standstill, his wife (Marie) would prepare a hot meal, and their son carried it to the pub in an egg basket.

In early 1933, Prohibition was repealed, and real beer with 3.2 percent alcohol became available. On that first day, the pub got two kegs of beer because Blitz-Weinhard brewery couldn’t meet the demand. With legal real beer available, after an absence of about 10 years, the pub did a rousing brisk business that day and sold out in a matter of hours.

Although the kid was a minor, Murph taught him how to draw tap beer with a good head. The Oregon Liquor Control Commission, however, did not release the beer until a day or two after the prohibition was lifted. Murph felt that it was highly improper, so he brought it before the City Council, which ruled anything that was slightly irregular. Notice was given to Murph that serving beer by a minor must cease, so it did.
1930-1939: Survival in Tough Times

Depression didn’t end Ambleside dream

Clarence Allesina, unofficial mayor of Ambleside, is snug in his wood-paneled living room, the Hogan Cedars standing sentinel outside. The sun catches a patch of still water on Johnson Creek and beams through the green gloom.

Ambleside, founded by rich Portland families as a summer retreat, is a tucked-away patch of Gresham off Hogan Road. Former summer homes, long since converted to full-time residences, ramble along the winding creek and a series of ponds. The place is so special it has its own trees, the conical Hogan Cedars, which appeared in the little valley after a turn-of-the-century logging operation. They are unique to that one spot on the planet. As is Clarence Allesina.

Allesina, now in his 90s, wandered the world in three tours in the military but always homed in on Ambleside. He and his wife, Jean Bokkin Allesina, first moved there in 1939. But Clarence, a handy kid who graduated from Benson Tech in 1931, had been to the enclave earlier in 1928 to help fix a water system serving the summer homes.

When he was a kid, Allesina says, “I never dreamed I’d ever own the place. It is beautiful, really beautiful.”

Ambleside Inc. was a little paradise, founded by Portland businessmen in barge and banking circles. Families rode the interurban line to Hogan Station and walked the winding lane to their homes. The owners hired a landscape architect to build river-stone ponds and rock gardens, waterfalls and footpaths. The dream crashed in The Depression.

By 1939, ordinary folk like the Allesinas were able to rent a house there.

“Ten dollars a month,” remembers Clarence, who enjoyed two careers. He began work as a kid for Hessel Implement Co. in Gresham with Bill Hessel, third generation of the family, and still reports to work each morning with “the boys.” A founding member of the Gresham Elks Lodge, he served a three-year hitch in the Army Air Corps, 1932 to 1935, and returned again in 1941 to serve through World War II. A third hitch in Korea kept him in uniform 14 years, retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1965.

In 1945, Jean Allesina tracked her husband down in the desert near Blythe, Calif., phoning to tell him that the owners of the Ambleside home they were renting would sell the home and two and one-half acres for $4,500.

“Why did you bother to call?” Clarence told her. The house was theirs. They rented it out during the 14 years that Allesina worked his way through military ranks, but it was always home. And still is. He recalls his neighbors up and down the lane, their families, the swimming holes for the kids, the couple who built their home from scratch, the house with a cement floor that the family hosed out after a long weekend, the neighbor who toiled in his flower beds.

A voter-approved Greenspace program in 1995 paid $60 million to willing sellers for parks and green space properties including slightly more than 40 acres of Ambleside. Privately owned land in Ambleside is rare.

First published in The Outlook, Nov. 29, 2002.
Centennial Year Calendar

**Gresham Then and Now Art Exhibit**
Tuesday, Jan. 25, through Thursday, March 3, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Gresham Council Chambers
Experience a snapshot of time through this collection of memories. Browse through images of Gresham Then and Now at the art exhibit from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, beginning Jan. 25 and running through March 3. All artwork is for sale.

**Gresham Then and Now Artists' Reception**
Tuesday, Feb. 1, 5 to 6:30 p.m., Gresham Council Chambers
Visit with Gresham Then and Now artists during this reception, which also features live music and light refreshments.

**Gresham 100-Year Gala**
Friday, Feb. 11, 6:30 p.m., Persimmon Country Club
This evening of entertainment and excitement celebrates Gresham's first 100 years and ushers in the dawn of a new era. This fund-raising gala features cocktails, dinner, dancing with live music by Too Much and a special toast to Gresham. Proceeds benefit the Gresham 100-Year Celebration. For ticket information, call Connie Otto at 503-618-2360.

**Gresham Remembers: A 100-Year Celebration**
Saturday, Feb. 12, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Historic Downtown Gresham
This family festival has something for everyone. Experience 100 years of history through interactive exhibits, crafts, music, dancing and merriment for all ages. Enjoy free trolley rides throughout Historic Downtown with stops and activities at the Gresham Library, Gresham History Museum and the former J.C. Penney building.

**Business Summit 2005**
Presented by Mt. Hood Community College Foundation, Business Relations Committee.
Friday, April 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., MHCC, 26000 S.E. Stark St.
The theme of this summit is “cultivating knowledge,” and the goal for Gresham's new century is to make East Metro the epicenter of the Pacific Northwest Research Triangle. The keynote speaker is Dr. Adrian Roberts, senior advisor/Battelle. For more information, call Sunny Klever at 503-491-7206 or Larkin Franks at 503-491-7666. Details also are available at www.mhccfoundation.org.

**Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce Business Showcase & Auction**
Thursday, April 28, 4 to 8 p.m., location to be announced.
Tip your hats to Gresham businesses. Even though the economy has changed from berries to high-tech wafers, the passion of local businesses remains the same. This annual showcase includes business products and services from members of the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce. The event also features a silent auction, door prizes and a variety of food and beverage tasting.

**Mt. Hood Community College Foundation Auction of the Century**
Saturday, May 14, 5 p.m., Oregon Convention Center
The Mt. Hood Community College Foundation wishes Gresham happy 100th at its annual auction and dinner. This event, open to the public, is a benefit for students at MHCC. For reservation information, call Sunny Klever at 503-491-7206.

**100-Year Celebration Parade**
Saturday, May 21, 10 a.m., Historic Downtown Gresham
Citizens young and old will enjoy this smashing parade that includes floats, vintage costumes, historic cars featuring longtime Gresham residents, marching bands and covered wagons as we celebrate a century of community. Volunteers interested in helping with float construction should call Joe Anderson at 503-618-2432.

**Starlight Parade**
Saturday, June 4, 8:30 p.m., downtown Portland
With the theme “Celebrating a Century of Community,” Mayor Charles Becker and others proudly ride Gresham's float throughout the streets of downtown Portland in the second-largest illuminated parade in the Northwest. Local residents and business are donating time and materials to construct the float that will show off Gresham's spirit.

**Gresham Historical Society Historic Homes & Landmark Tours**
June and July 2005, various locations
Take part in self-guided and guided tours of Gresham's finest historic homes and landmarks.

**Olympic Bed Races**
Friday, Aug. 12, 7 p.m., Main Avenue
You have to see it to believe! Witness the fun tradition of bed racing. Teams representing Gresham Fire & Emergency Services, Gresham Police, merchants, schools and community groups race their specialty beds down a 350-foot stretch of Main Avenue. This is no sleeper event, so hold onto your bed knobs.

**Northwest Motorsports Rockin' Round the Block Classic Car Show**
Saturday, Aug. 13, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Historic Downtown Gresham
This annual party is always a gas! The daylong event features approximately 700 classic cars, live music including Ron Rudy and the Hurricanes, games, activities, clowns and vendor booths. At 10 a.m., kids and their parents take to the streets with their bikes and trikes for the Main Street Parade. Spectators are encouraged to vote for their favorite classic cars throughout the day; awards are presented at 5 p.m. The Car Cruise through historic downtown Gresham begins at 6 p.m. To register a classic car for the show, call Mike and Joan Porter at 503-666-1568.

**20th Anniversary Sister City Cultural Fair**
Saturday, Aug. 20, 12 to 6 p.m., Main City Park
This fair of heritages recognizes cultures from around the globe that now call Gresham and East Multnomah County home. The event features colorful costumes, music, arts and crafts, folklore, dancing and cuisine.

**Teddy Bear Parade**
Saturday, Sept. 24, 10 a.m., Historic Downtown Gresham
Sponsored by the Soroptimists Club of Gresham and Gresham Lions, the annual Teddy Bear Parade features marching bands, floats, horses and, of course, hundreds of teddy bears.

**Gresham Little Theater Historic Play Fall 2005, Gresham Little Theater**
Prepare to have your hoop skirts ruffled as you chuckle at the antics of yesteryear. Gresham Little Theater, in conjunction with the Fairview-Wilkes Historical Society, is writing and producing a series of vignettes based on the Zimmerman family pioneers who lived in the same house for 100 years.
1940-1949: War Changes Everything

Hundreds from Gresham served — and dozens died

The cost to Gresham of World War II was incalculable. In the waning days of the war, with its push in Europe and the Pacific, nearly every edition of The Gresham Outlook seemed to announce the loss of another local soldier, sailor, pilot, or Marine.

Gresham historians provide this list of known casualties for World War II from the Gresham area. It is from the Gresham chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars:


And, from other sources: Joseph Ruhlin, who died in Italy.

In “Gresham Stories of Our Past, Before and After the World Wars,” researchers found as many as 1,500 names of veterans of World War II in the Gresham area. While offering only a sampling of the servicemen and women who took part in the war, their names are: Clarence Allesina (Clarence still lives in Gresham), Leslie St. Clair (son of the publisher of The Gresham Outlook), Roy Walters, Kenneth Miller, Bernhard Olbrich, Robert Darnielle, William Harlow, Glenn Handy, Bud Tauscher, Gerald Wilson, Lester Anderson (who survived a parachute landing behind German lines), Glenn Carroll, Lew Carroll and Thomas, Seabert and Leland Carter.

Also, Jim Chase (late a surveyor and first president of the Gresham Historical Society), Vincent Chiiodo, Ralph Clinton, (who still lives in Gresham on a Century Farm held by his family), Gordon Doolittle (who became a brigadier general), Dalton Eggleston, Glenn Ewalt, Galen and Don Fancher, Charles Frazee and Joe, Tony, Frank and Louis Gigiotti.

Also, Ted Haines (who became a well-known Western artist), Ted Harris (who became a hero in Korea), Orville Johnson (who would later be principal of Troutdale school), Mike Kehrli (who received the Bronze Star) and Jack Malcom (who became a Gresham florist and still lives in Gresham).

Also Lynn McKeel (who would later found the M&M Restaurant), Russell Mealey (a Gresham jeweler), Jim, Herb, Eldon and Tom Metzger (Tom is a volunteer with the Gresham Historical Society), James Moore (who became the main force in building the Gresham Armory), Leonard Morgan, Ross Morgan, Dan Murphy (whose father owned a tavern in Gresham), Marvin Ogle (who still lives in Gresham), Charles Olson, Betty and Bob Rodgers, Gordon Schneider, Robert Schneider, Gale Stockton, Gordon Stone and Ollie Stookey (who enlisted after the death of her husband, Don Stookey).

Also Gordon Swan (who would later be a Gresham mayor), Stanley Swan (who became an aide to Congressman Edith Green), Harry Thompson (who would return to become superintendent of Gresham Union High School District), Melvin Ward, Bennett Welsh (who would become a talented artist/potter), Clinton Witter and Meredith “Red” Wood.

Parents of those in the military flew a flag with a blue star on their house to show that they had a child at war. When that son or daughter was lost, a flag with a gold star was raised. Mothers of the fallen formed an organization called Gold Star Mothers.

The war in Europe ended in May of 1945, but the celebration was quiet in Gresham because the war in the Pacific and a possible invasion of Japan still loomed.

The August bombings with atomic bombs of Hiroshima and then Nagasaki, Japan, brought the war to a close with the signing of surrender on board the U.S. Battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945.
All the news that's fit to print

The Gresham Outlook is started by a former minister in 1911, records community as it grows

In 1905, the year Gresham became a town, H.L. St. Clair also made history. At the age of 39, he was quite possibly the only person to enter the newspaper business for his health.

"My health failed," wrote the former Methodist minister, "so I located at Gresham. I was called upon to rescue a small local newspaper from demise," said St. Clair, who would go on to found The Gresham Outlook.

St. Clair's health problems were nothing compared to those of the man he replaced as printer of the newspaper the Gresham Gazette. The Gazette pressman suffered an affliction common among printers of his day and was often too drunk to cope with the press.

Imagine the delight of Fred Conley, owner of the Gazette, when he found to be his printer the ailing but Methodist-sober St. Clair. St. Clair labored six years for other men on other Gresham papers before he branched out on his own, founding The Gresham Outlook on March 3, 1911.

Not many people get to name a newspaper. St. Clair's daughter got the chance in 1911 when her father sat at the family dinner table and asked his wife, Lena, and the four St. Clair children (a fifth child was born later) what to call the paper he planned to start in Gresham.

"It was my father's words and expressions that prompted me," Mildred St. Clair Davies remembered in an interview 74 years later. "He had spoken of a paper that takes an outlook on this area — an outlook on the present, the future and maybe on what's past.

"I said, 'Why not The Gresham Outlook,' " she recalled.

"My father said, 'That's perfect — just perfect.' "

Previously, readers needed scorecards to keep track of Gresham's newspapers.

Some accounts credit the East Portland Vindicator, published in the 1880s by Ford Metzger, as being the first paper in the area. But the name Gresham did not appear on a masthead until the weekly Gresham Gazette was started by a Mr. Watson early in 1904.

Watson operated what was known among printers as a "bedroom plant" in his living quarters. He printed the Gazette on a Washington hand press, described by some as looking much like a good-size cider press.

According to a "History of Oregon Newspapers" and a 1959 Outlook article, Conley, who was also the local mail carrier, purchased the Gazette in February 1905. Conley persuaded St. Clair, who had once served an apprenticeship in a print shop, to take charge of the struggling paper, and St. Clair needed the job.

St. Clair, who had preferred Harry to his actual first name of Henry, got his start in 1882 in a Midwest printing office to pay his way through school, where he ultimately earned a divinity degree. He married classmate Lena Chase in September 1894.

The couple was "church-mouse poor" and had four babies in six years. He was often away from home. Sometimes there was no money for groceries. They moved to Oregon in the early 1900s. But after 10 years as a minister, St. Clair suffered what would now be called burnout and settled in Gresham.

His newspaper job led him to work for three of Gresham's business leaders, Lewis Shattuck, T.R. Howitt and Dr. J.M. Short, who took over the paper and plant from Fred Conley. They called their publication the East Multnomah Record. In August 1905, they sold to Timothy Brownhill, an attorney who came to Gresham to become editor of the paper.

Brownhill enlarged the plant, changed the name to Multnomah Record and later to the Beaver State Herald. In 1908 he sold to H.A. Darnall, who continued publishing the Herald until the summer of 1911, when he decided that Lents was the up-and-coming community and moved his entire printing office and paper to that community. It was an unwise move, and the Herald died a slow death in Lents.

H.L. St. Clair launches The Outlook

Darnall's abandonment of Gresham was an opportunity for St. Clair, who chose to stay behind in Gresham assembling a printing plant in the upstairs rooms above a millinery shop in the John Metzger building. Among his prize acquisitions was the new-fangled Linotype, a piece of typesetting equipment commonly seen only in larger cities. This one was a small model called a Junior that looked a lot like a high-tech harp. It was operated under the deft fingering of Emma B. Johnson, who would work 30 years for the paper.

The first edition of The Outlook showed a line engraving of the machine and included pictures of St. Clair and E.S. Smith, advertising manager. The lead story included news that the Gresham council was considering a site for a town hall and the possibility of granting a license to a shooting gallery.

St. Clair had no trouble covering city council meet-
Outlook: Moves twice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

ings because he was always present as city recorder. His wife, Lena St. Clair, was a career woman before her time, remembered her youngest daughter, Margaret St. Clair Okrasinski.

"Her greatest pleasure was to sit behind the high bookkeeper's desk in the front office when she was not busy typing news items or proofreading. She enjoyed greeting friends and subscribers. Many confided in her their personal problems."

"My father had a lot of nerves," Mildred St. Clair Davies recalled. "My mother was the one who kept her cool, as they say these days." Davies' husband, Benjamin, would later be a reporter for the paper.

Harry and Lena St. Clair's two sons, Chase and Leslie, joined in the business. The paper was published twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays, until 1933 when the Depression struck, forcing the St. Clairs to cut back to once a week.

In 1914 the newspaper moved into a location on Main Avenue, known then as the E.C. Lindsey building. It occupied a space that is now a double driveway adjacent to the Central Café. It remained there nearly 60 years until a 1973 move to a new building at 1190 N.E. Division St., a site regarded as a "long way out of town."

A staple of the early Outlooks were columns by local correspondents and tidbits of news called "Gresham Locals."

These items recorded the comings and goings of local residents, the mumps and the chicken pox that struck their children, the visiting relatives, the cuts and scrapes, the family dinners and picnics and even — on slow news days — those who took trips to Portland.

Correspondents Faye Dempsey, then 83, and Marion Hoss were interviewed for a 1986 anniversary edition of the paper. Like scores of others, Dempsey and Hoss gathered news by telephone once a week. "I never thought of it as gossip," Dempsey said. "I just wrote what I thought people would be interested in."

TURN TO OUTLOOK, PAGE 38

Congratulations Gresham

Thank you Gresham for being a wonderful place to grow up and raise a family.

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Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson

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Dempsey, who wrote for the community of Pleasant Home, set aside in an envelope in the buffet drawer the $2 she earned each month. She hoped someday to accumulate $15 to buy a Bible concordance. She found one on sale for $9, raided her Outlook stash, and stuffed the leftover change in the back of the drawer. That was in the 1960s. In 1985, when the interview brought her former career to mind, Dempsey returned to the drawer and found her original pay still in the envelope.

Hoss and Bettie Stewart of Rockwood were among the last community correspondents for The Outlook. The community correspondent columns died out in the 1970s as the suburbs began. Hoss wrote her column until her retirement in 1969. It talked of small-town activities, the “doings” at First Baptist Church and angel food cake recipes, and was filled with names.

“People like to see their name in the paper,” she said.

H.L. St. Clair, perhaps because he was a former minister, often felt compelled to comment on the fact that the deceased was bound for heaven when he wrote obituaries. St. Clair died in 1938, leaving Lena and his sons to run the paper until 1941, when they sold to Iowa newspaperman Tom Purcell.

**Tom Purcell buys paper in 1941**

Purcell liked banner-headline styles that made drastic changes in the paper’s looks. Headlines running the full width of the front page were normally devices reserved for war and other catastrophes, but Purcell used them for mundane topics. His first edition bantered the opening of Gresham’s new post office on July 25, 1941. His big opportunity came along in December of that year when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and America went to war.

It was a good time to buy a newspaper, and Purcell prospered. In 1947, he bought The Sandy Post. He expanded The Outlook printing plant and office in 1948 and installed a larger web-type, or continuous feed, press.

The Outlook burst with news during the war. Scrap drives, rationing, black-out notices, war bond rallies and, one by one, the sad one-column photos of young men dead in the Pacific or in Europe’s battlefields.

When Purcell retired in 1960, he recalled as the most gratifying times of the 19 years the post-war years and completion of the Gresham sewer project.

He said at his retirement that he had “seen the character of the area change from a rural community to one which now combines the same rural flavor with suburban growth spilling out of Portland.”

That growth would benefit the next buyers of the paper. In 1960, with Gresham beginning to bust out of its farm-town mode, the paper was purchased by two Washington state newspapermen, Lee Irwin and Walt Taylor.

**Lee Irwin Comes to Town**

“I came to Gresham at just the right time,” Lee Irwin would say later. “It was just starting to grow. What a time to be here and run a newspaper.”

Irwin and Taylor set out to build a small publishing empire. They had The Sandy Post as well as a string of other small weeklies throughout the state. Irwin, a University of Washington journalism professor who never got over his adoration of the Huskies, stayed on in Gresham to run The Outlook. Taylor moved to the Oregon Coast to run the papers there.

Irwin’s success was accompanied by personal loss. Two years after he came to Gresham, his wife, Marcia, died, leaving him with five children, ages 16 to 5, to rear alone. He married Gresham resident Bonnie Clawson in 1968. Two of his five children grew up to work in newspapers.

In addition to churning out five to six editorials and a personal column once a week, Irwin supervised his growing business and threw himself into community service. He was first reader of his church, First Church of Christ, Scientist, and chairman of the board. He campaigned tirelessly against city-county consolidation, a battle he won, and for the Mount Hood Freeway, a battle he lost. He served eight years on the state fair board and participated as well in Portland’s City Club. He was president of the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce.

“People always knew, even though I was president of the chamber, that I was publisher of The Outlook first,” he said.

One evening after a ball game, Irwin and Gresham residents Betty Schedeen and Marv Ogle met in Irwin’s office to discuss the idea of a community college in Gresham. Irwin became a founder of Mt. Hood Community College and a Patron Saint of the school.

It was Irwin who changed the technology of the paper from St. Clair’s old Linotype (called hot type) to the offset printing used today. In 1973, after nearly 60 years at 226 N. Main, the newspaper was moved to Division Street. In 1975, The Outlook was restored to twice-a-week publication. In 1979, the paper went to three times a week printing on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. It later stepped back to twice-a-week publications.

**The Outlook joins a chain**

When Irwin and Taylor sold their interests in 1977, The Outlook became part of the Albany (Ore.) Democrat-Herald group of papers owned by Glenn Jackson, prominent Oregon businessman and head of the state highway commission. The Glenn Jackson Bridge spanning the Columbia River between Portland and Vancouver, Wash., is named for him.

In 1980 the Democrat-Herald papers, including The Outlook and Sandy Post, were sold to Cap Cities Inc., a national communications firm that later bought ABC Television Network. The purchase of Cap Cities/ABC TV by Disney Corp. in August 1995 resulted in a brief ownership by Disney.

Irwin remained publisher of the paper until 1982, The Outlook’s 70th anniversary. Parkinson’s disease and associated illnesses led to his disability. He spent the last 10 years of his life in a nursing home, dying in Seattle on Jan. 11, 1995. Though he had not been a Gresham resident for more than a decade, hundreds of people attended a memorial service for him at Mt. Hood Community College.

Larry Walker followed Irwin as publisher. Other publishers in succession were Bob Caldwell, Steve Clark, Bill Hunter, Bruce Tarbet, and currently Mark Garber. In 1997, Lee Enterprises of Davenport, Iowa, bought the papers from Disney and in November 2000, The Outlook and its sister paper, The Sandy Post, were purchased by Community Newspapers Inc., part of Oregon Publishing Corporation. Garber, a former editor of The Outlook, was named publisher in May 2001.

The Outlook continues in publication today, printing twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. And it continues to report on the outlook of the community — “an outlook on the present, the future and maybe what’s past.”
1940-49: War Changes Everything

- 1940 — “Galloping Gertie,” a suspension bridge over the Narrows at Tacoma, broke up in wind and dropped almost 200 feet.

- 1940 — A November draft lottery signaled approaching war.

- 1940 — Gresham phone books served 1,200 households.

- 1941 — The new Gresham post office, a Works Progress Administration project of the Roosevelt administration, dedicated.

- 1941 — Clarence Alleina and 10 other men from Gresham joined the 123rd Observation Squadron to fly missions off the Oregon Coast searching for Japanese invaders.

Making soldiers feel at home

In 1989, John Newell, a retired San Antonio, Texas, newspaper editor, wrote a letter to Gresham that he had put off writing since 1943.

Newell was then a second lieutenant in an Army unit that was passing through Gresham in early November on its return to Fort Lewis, Wash. The troops camped in pup tents on the Gresham fairgrounds. Every night for almost a week, a new group of soldiers was in town.

A bank secretary named Mrs. Jack Copeland observed soldiers buying milk and baked goods in the local stores and got on the phone to local clubs and church groups saying Gresham could do better.

A full-fledged canteen was created in the Eagles Lodge. The Gresham Café loaned its jukebox. Three-thousand cups of coffee were poured. More than one-thousand cups of milk were served, and every homemaker in town scoured her late fall garden for fresh tomatoes for “the boys.”

Many residents took soldiers into their homes. The theater showed free movies. And a tall slender girl — Newell thought her name was Mary — danced with the young lieutenant from Arkansas.

“She’ll be about 70 and could have picked up a few pounds,” he wrote in a belated thank you in 1989. “But you’ll know her by her beautiful hazel eyes.”

Newell remembers the next morning as cold and “drizzle-misty” as the battalions rolled some 500 trucks out of the fairgrounds in a convoy nearly 20 miles long.

“I stood by my Jeep waiting to pick up my platoon … Exhaust fumes thickened the mist, and the roar of the six-by-six GMC trucks was continuous as they went through their gears and gained speed.

“People gathered along the sidewalks to watch. A blue overalled worker carrying a lunch kit hurried by and started my Jeep driver, Merida, by showing a $1 bill into his hand. ‘Gigarette money,’ he said. Patriotism took many forms.

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OUR FAMILY SERVING YOUR FAMILY
1940-49: War Changes Everything

War brought together couples who otherwise wouldn’t have met

In 1992, The Gresham Outlook sought out couples—many approaching their golden wedding anniversaries—who had experienced wartime romance and marriage during World War II. This story is about Vera and John Peters, who would later settle in the community, build a bowling alley and make a difference here.

Only her undies and her shoes were her own when Vera Mogren walked down the aisle to marry Sgt. John Peters. Everything else, including the car they drove to their wedding reception, was borrowed.

“We didn’t have any money,” said Vera, a 68-year-old widow who in 1992 still looked very much like the blond bride she was at 20 in 1944. “My hair was natural,” she said, looking at her wedding photo and then grinned, “but nobody knows that today.”

The couple didn’t have much in common, either. She was Scandinavian. He was Lebanese. She was Lutheran. He was Catholic. She worked for the U.S. Navy. He was in the U.S. Army. Their parents were aghast.

“The war diversified people,” Vera said looking back. “It spread us around the U.S. Before, you would have married someone in your hometown and stayed in your hometown.”

But home was far away when Vera left Minnesota to work for the payroll department of the Navy at Hunter’s Point near San Francisco.

She had never met an African-American, except for porters on the train. Wartime San Francisco was a merry mix of people from every part of the United States. She met John, who had been injured at Pearl Harbor and sent to the Presidio in San Francisco. Introduced by her roommate, the pair went on a blind date to see Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour in a live performance for wounded soldiers at the Presidio.

“It sort of happened real fast,” she said of her romance with the tall, dark, handsome soldier. “He had a lot of personality.

Service in two branches of the military brought together Vera and John Peters, shown here on their wedding day.

He was very much a ladies’ man.”

The first thing John Peters’ father said when told of the romance was: “Get her to a priest.”

Aided by an Army chaplain who was a priest, she converted to Catholicism. A dress and veil were borrowed. German prisoners of war who did the yard work at the Presidio picked the wedding flowers.

John’s sister and mother arrived the day before the wedding. The bride did not meet her father-in-law until much later.

“They accepted me very well,” she remembered.

The two marched down the aisle on Friday, April 13, 1944, four months after they met. The Navy was seated on one side of the chapel, the Army on the other. They borrowed his colonel’s car to go to their wedding reception at the officer’s club.

“Then we took the street car to the St. Francis Hotel in downtown San Francisco. And the next day, back to work and John to the Presidio,” she remembered.

The pair combined their wages of $370 a month to rent a small house in San Francisco at an address that would be famous in drug-culture days, Haight and Ashbury streets.

“We got by,” she said of their small income, but they knew they could not have a family until times were better.

In 1960 they moved to Gresham, where they astonished the community by building Eastmont Lanes “clear out on Powell Boulevard” near what is now Fred Meyer.

The bowling alley was nearly destroyed in the 1962 Columbus Day storm, and in 1963, following a burglary, John Peters died of a heart attack.

Widowhood left Vera with a son and daughter to raise and a business to run. For many years she ran an award and trophy shop in Gresham, and for many other years she has been a volunteer at the Gresham Historical Society.
1940-1949: War Changes Everything

Kinoshita family survives internment during war

A berry and produce farmer, Kazuo Kinoshita was the son of Tokujie and Kise Nisuiyama Kinoshita. His mother was a picture bride who came to this country in 1910 to marry her farmer husband.

“She came looking for a better life,” Kazuo Kinoshita said of his mother in 1985.

The newlyweds moved to Oregon immediately after their marriage ceremony in Seattle and eventually farmed near Linnemann Junction, where they raised their four children.

Kazu Kinoshita attended Gresham schools, graduated from Gresham High and married Ami Namio in 1940. Their two eldest daughters were sent to the Minidoka internment camp during World War II.

“They had someone to take care of the farm for them, or they would have lost the place,” said son Ken Kinoshita.

Kise Kinoshita was a picture bride in 1910. She came to marry a farmer, 'looking for a better life.'

“The farm is all houses now,” he added.
1940-49: War Changes Everything

Sailor travels to war memorial

Ross Morgan survived stormy North Atlantic

Ross Morgan never favored war. Only a few days away from his 82nd birthday on May 29, 2004, he went to the dedication of the nation's World War II memorial in Washington, D.C., and his view had not changed.

Morgan survived World War II as a U.S. Navy radioman hunting German submarines over the North Atlantic. “We lost a third of our (torpedo) squadron,” he says, “and we were never shot at.”

The North Atlantic in winter was enemy enough. The pitching decks of carriers bouncing in the black vastness of a cold, cold ocean were fatal for flyers who miscalculated.

Morgan and his crew lived to come home and to tell the story, but he is the last alive of his three-man crew. Statistics say that 1,100 World War II vets die each day. A practical man, Morgan doubts that he will live much longer. He and other Gresham vets who attended the memorial dedication were far from alone, but their ranks are thinning. Of the 117,000 spectators expected at the Washington mall, 65 percent of the seats were claimed by those who had a part in the war. It was believed to be the largest collection of octogenarians ever gathered in one spot.

Ross and Shirley Morgan were accompanied by their son, Ted, and daughter, Janine. Knowing he had headed for Washington, D.C., Morgan chose to conserve his energy and pass up the opportunity to see the ashes of his old friend, Ted Harris, placed at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

He went to the memorial in the name of his comrades lost off the deck of the carriers. He went to revisit Washington, D.C., where he had an office when he headed the state employment office. And he went to remember those who did not live to have careers and families and honored old age.

After the war, Morgan came back to Gresham, where he ran an insurance agency and paid his dues in the community, school board, city council, Mt. Hood Community College, the hospital, the state Senate and then was appointed to the state employment office by Gov. Tom McCall. Now it is time to reflect.

“For nearly 50 years I never cried, even when my father died,” he said, wiping a tear. “A whole lot of people, some of my best friends, died in that war. And it’s pretty hard to come up with what was important, and what wasn’t.”

“Everyone is proud of U.S. Navy torpedo squadrons made the Atlantic unsafe for German subs, penning them up and keeping them from getting out into the war. “The storms were unbelievable. Once I got courage enough to go out on the cat walk... the wind was 140 mph, or that was what it measured until it burned out a bearing (in the wind speed indicator).”

Morgan says that he “never got over being afraid... I was so damn lucky to get home to talk about it.”


Barger’s mill expanded to meet war needs

Harry Barger came to Gresham in 1940 and launched a sawmill on the exact spot where Gresham City Hall sits today. During World War II, Barger’s mill employed 75 workers and turned out products to meet the demands of war.

He made lots of money, he said in a 1988 Outlook interview, “and I spent all of it.”

In one of Gresham’s most spectacular fires, Barger’s mill burned to the ground in 1949. Barger rebuilt it and then sold out in 1956 when the bottom went out of the wood products industry and mills were going broke. Unfortunately, he invested his money in the company that bought him out and lost his shirt, as he liked to say.

In 1952, Barger went to the top of Gresham Butte and built a subdivision that he named after himself. “They call it Gresham Butte,” he said, “But the left side is Barger Heights.” Barger had bigger plans for Gresham Butte but ran afoul of Gresham’s ban on building on steep slopes. Undeterred, he was back in the building business in the 1970s, constructing some 200 homes, including Maggie Highlands, which he named after his mother-in-law.

At 80, Barger was still in business selling carpeting. “What I like is business. I plan to keep going until I drop,” he said.
1940-49: War Changes Everything

Citizen of the Year nurtured Gresham

Florence Carroll contributed time and organization to city

Florence Carroll, 1916-2000

Florence Carroll nurtured a community, loved its children and buried its dead. Named Gresham's Citizen of the Year in 1999, she said former Gresham Mayor Gussie McRobert. “If each of us contributed to our community one-tenth of what Florence did, we'd be in very good shape,” McRobert said.

Carroll's list of Gresham firsts began in 1945 when she started the first United Fund Drive in the community. She and two friends launched what would become the Toy and Joy program. In the funeral home that she managed with her husband, Lew, she and others created an aid program from shoeboxes full of index cards bearing the names of needy families that evolved into Snow-CAP. She started the first Camp Fire Girl program, was one of the founders of Mt. Hood Community College and served 50 years as leader and secret banker of a 4-H equestrian group.

When she was 12, her father abandoned her mother and nine children.

Florence Carroll started an aid program at Bateman Carroll Funeral Chapel that evolved into Snow-CAP.

“They were dirt poor and abandoned in the plains of Minnesota with no social services, no Social Security. She was the second oldest and took a lot of responsibility,” says her son, Kelly Carroll. Among family members Carroll cared for was a brother who died in a federal prison. “He was the bad egg, but she always cared for him and remembered him and his family,” Carroll said.

The Multnomah County Fair and the Mount Hood 4-H Equestrian Team honored Carroll for a half-century of horse sense. Carroll, who mucked her own stalls until the age of 80, once said, “Why deprive your children? When they ask for the moon, why don’t you say, ‘Wouldn’t you rather have a horse?’”

Carroll was a founding member of Soroptimists and a patron saint of Mt. Hood Community College in 1974. She worked on the Oral Hull Foundation for the Blind Garden in Sandy, won a preservationist award from the Gresham Historical Society, attended First Baptist church for 50 years, took on foster children and followed her own two children and grandchildren through sports and school events.

In her youth she was a maid for wealthy families to finance her education, hitchhiking twice to Oregon. She was a teacher in Estacada when she met Lew Carroll. The two were married on June 12, 1942, in Rhode Island when he was in the U.S. Navy. After the war they returned to Gresham to join his father in the family business, Carroll Funeral Home. For 20 years she was the only licensed woman funeral director in Oregon.

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Despite hardships, Japanese prevail

Many lost their homes and farms when the U.S. interned those with Japanese ancestry in camps during World War II

On most days, Asa Shiiki would put on her work trousers and go out to hoe the rows of cabbage that roller-coastered up and down the hill fields of the Shiiki Farm on Hogan Road.

Now the Persimmon Country Club, those fields no longer bear the hoe marks of the Issei. In 1985, Asa Shiiki, then 91—92 by Japanese reckoning, since Japanese consider themselves a year old on the day they are born — was one of the last of the Issei, or first generation, who came to the Gresham area in the early 1900s. Her son, Ray Shiiki, a Nisei or second generation, interpreted for her mother.

"Dad learned how to read and write. What little he knew, he would teach her. But there was no use learning because they planned to go back to Japan after three years," Ray Shiiki said. "It has been 67 years now."

Though many of the Japanese women who came to Oregon to marry were "picture brides," chosen on the strength of a photo and the advice of a skillful matchmaker, Asa and Rikizo Shiiki were married in Japan. Rikizo came to the United States to work for three years, planning to return to his homeland. But Asa, too, wanted to see the new country. She followed her husband a year later in 1917, landing in Astoria where he was working. A friend advised her on the intricacies of wearing western clothing. Even American underwear was a mystery to the Japanese women.

A year later, in 1918, the Shiikis moved to Gresham to live in a tiny neighborhood of Japanese families clustered in the area that is now Main City Park. It was no accident that the sons and grandsons of these first settlers developed a portion of Main City Park as a Japanese garden in the 1970s.

Restrictive laws kept Japanese immigrants from gaining citizenship or owning land. Like many others, the Shiikis started their farm on rented land. It was not until their American-born daughter was 18 that they could buy land of their own.

Rikizo Shiiki worked long hours and got up well before dawn to take his produce to Portland's Yamhill market. At home, Asa would bundle up her new daughter, pop her in a buggy and wheel her out to the field to pick berries and cucumbers.

It was incredibly lonesome existence. Listening closely, Ray Shiiki interpreted for his mother. "She says when she was very lonely she would go outside and see the moon. She figured it was the same moon that was over her old house in Japan, and she would stand there and cry and look up at the moon."

With $75 earned from picking fruits and vegetables, she bought her first treasure, a Singer sewing machine. By then she had five children (one youngest died), and they needed clothing.

"She would look at the pictures in the newspapers and the catalog and make her own patterns, cut out of newspaper, then she'd make clothes for three girls. My dad would buy the material at the Yamhill market. She didn't have much choice. He'd just bring home so many yards. All the dresses looked alike."

The proof is in the old black album pages, pictures of rows of Shiiki offspring, all in beautifully tailored clothing, all the same fabric.

"We grew up with the Hoffmeister family (Mary and Shorty Hoffmeister)," Ray Shiiki remembered. "We'd play all day with their kids and eat where we ended up at mealtimes. Sometimes German food. Sometimes Japanese food."

When World War II came, the Shiikis, like all other local Japanese families, were shipped to relocation centers in Idaho carrying only one small suitcase each. A neighbor kept a crate of treasured family albums for them.

The Hoffmeister boys followed the bus full of Japanese all the way into Portland and to the stockyards where the Japanese were first housed, just to make sure they knew where their friends were going.

In May 1942, 829 residents of East Multnomah County were loaded into buses by the United States Army and hauled away to imprisonment behind barbed wire.

The hundreds of Japanese-Americans who were moved from the Gresham fairgrounds on Monday and Tuesday, May 11 and May 12, were friends and neighbors.

Most had lived in Gresham since the early 1900s. Their 109 children were students in Gresham grade and high schools. Eleven were high school seniors only days away from their graduation ceremonies. Instead, they received their diplomas at the so-called Portland Assembly Center, a hastily-organized shelter built in the livestock pavilion. Eventually, they were sent to Camp Minidoka near Burley, Idaho. After the war, many chose to stay in Idaho or Eastern Oregon. Only an estimated half to one-third came back. Those who did return three years later found signs in Gresham store windows declaring, "No Japs."

Kaz Fuji was already in the Army in Texas by Pearl Harbor Day, Dec. 7, 1941. The only person of Japanese descent in his whole company, Kaz Fuji would go on to serve in Europe.

In Portland, his father, Bukichi, recognized that his family was deteriorating in the crowded conditions at the Portland Assembly Center and volunteered for a farm.
Japanese: Gresham discouraged them from coming home

Continued from Page 44

labor crew in the fields of Idaho and Eastern Oregon. Gresham’s Henry Kato organized and recruited many of the work crews.

“We lived in tents through two winters,” remembers Jim Fujii, recalling the humiliation of segregated buses, the harassment of Japanese girls, the embarrassment of having to leave a restaurant with his championship ball team because the owner would not serve a “Jap.”

But the Fujii had a stake in the area; they owned their land in Troutdale. It was being cared for by their neighbors. They returned despite the fact that Gresham community leaders had formed a corporation to keep them from coming home.

“We were on Main Street across from Miller-Kidder Hardware, and Larry Aylsworth (who would later be a Multnomah County commissioner) was standing there with a bunch of men. They just stared at us.

“Then,” Jim Fujii remembered in a 1981 interview, “Aylsworth walked away from them, came across the street and put his arms around my dad and shook his hand. He did it in front of God and everybody. I’ve never forgotten that.”

Though American born, Gresham farmer Jack Ouchida lived under the rule of his father, Kuida.

“The males of the first generation were real shoguns,” he said in a 1998 interview. In August 1940, Kuida Ouchida told his son, then in his mid-20s, that he had arranged a bride from Japan. As a concession to life in the U.S., however, Kuida Ouchida had selected for his son a woman raised in Japan, but having been born in Hawaii, was an American citizen.

In Japan, Shizuko Harano was shown a picture of her intended, commenting years later, “He looked a little old to me.” She was given a description of his qualities — “Good worker, no smoke, no drink, no absences in high school and healthy.”

Swayed by the fact that she had two brothers in Hawaii, she agreed to come to a strange country to be a bride to a man she’d never met.

“It was really risky for a girl to do that,” Jack Ouchida would say on the couple’s 40th anniversary. “To give herself up to a total stranger. I have to respect that.”

The whole Ouchida family went to San Francisco to meet Shizuko at the dock. The newlyweds honeymooned in California with the family along, returning to Portland for a Dec. 11, 1940, formal ceremony.

“The formal ceremony had no meaning. In my father’s eyes, we were married when we met at the dock,” Jack Ouchida remembered.

And the Dec. 11 date was tainted. Only four days before their first anniversary in 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Shizuko Ouchida’s father and stepmother were in Japan. Her brothers in Hawaii fought on the side of the Americans.

Sickened and shocked, the couple refused to ever again celebrate the date, choosing instead to mark their anniversary on Thanksgiving Day, the day they met at the dock in San Francisco.

Jack Ouchida died at the age of 86 in 2000. He and his wife, who survives him, celebrated 60 years together.

Tommy Takeuchi never talked about internment with his children until they asked. When they did — usually when they were in high school and heard about the episode — he showed them the book.

“Minidoka Interlude” looked like a high school yearbook with its photos of the basketball and baseball teams, the choir, the orchestra, the Christmas party and a pretty girl in a heart-shaped frame — Sweetheart of Minidoka.

Turn to JAPANESE, Page 46
Residents help fight flood

Gresham was high and dry in the 1948 Columbia River flood that wiped out the Portland community of Vanport (now Delta Park) and inundated much of Troutdale and Fairview.

But Gresham residents joined the fight to save the Reynolds Metals Plant at Troutdale. When the Campbell Road dike gave way, drivers from Gresham Transfer and local firefighters descended on Blue Lake Park to pack up the Nick Welsh family, bag and baggage, as water rushed into the park. The rescuers even grabbed the motors for the amusement park rides and hauled them to safety.

Maidie Welsh would remember, “I was just starting to worry about my automatic washer when I saw one man under the house disconnecting the water and another disconnecting the wiring. In no time, the washer was loaded on the truck — and it wasn’t just torn out, it was taken out carefully and properly.”

Gresham community leader Burton Walrad, then a Multnomah County deputy sheriff in charge of fire protection outside of Portland, became a movie photographer during the flood. He was selected to film the Vanport disaster from an Army DUKW landing craft with Gen. Mark Clark, who came to inspect the flood damage.

Outlook publisher Tom Purcell saw his career as a college professor wash away when records for his Vanport College newspaper management class were lost in the flood.

“I had to rely on my memory to figure out grades for my students,” he said, laughing about the “high water mark” of his teaching career.

Mastens grew corn, children in ‘sticks’

Sidlined by congestive heart failure in the summer of 1998, Berniece Masten, president and founder of the Dogwood Garden Club, admitted that for the first time in 50 years she did not have a garden at her Lynch area home.

In 1949, Masten — the last active charter member of the Dogwood Garden Club — and her husband, Bill, were pioneers in a new wave of suburbanites who moved out to “the sticks,” in their case, 162nd Avenue and Division Street. Bernice’s twin sister, Bertha Zumwalt, was a teacher in the Lynch District.

In the early days the Mastens had a house and a barn. They grew five children and corn and strawberries, selling the latter by the side of the road. Bill was a champion truck driver for Bend-Portland freight lines and also a member of the school board. He was chairman of the board when Centennial High School was built, and his name is there in the foyer on the plaque.

“I can’t tell you how many people came to buy strawberries and wanted to buy our place,” she recalls.

The subdivision around her house was once the corn patch. Corn sold for $1 a bag. “Some people brought big old cotton bags wanting all that corn for $1 when we were figuring on grocery bags.”

Bill always said, “If they want to be that cheap, let them.”

From a 1998 Outlook profile of Berniece Masten, Centennial resident.

Japanese: Some saw struggle as forerunner of civil rights

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The book was unique, the only one of its kind published in any of the 10 relocation camps where Japanese-Americans spent World War II behind barbed war. Thomas Takeuchi, grocer and in his retirement years a Gresham real estate salesman, was the editor of the Minidoka Interlude. He and his wife, Tomi, and their two little girls lived in Block 34.

Though their loyalty as citizens had been called into question because “they looked like the enemy,” the residents of Minidoka were Americans. On the Fourth of July, 1943, 3,000 Minidokans heard Helen Kinoshita sing the national anthem and rose together under a star-lit desert sky to join in “God Bless America.”

Their soldier sons, some 300 young men, returned to the camp on furlough, if they returned at all. Their combat unit was the 442nd, the most decorated to fight in the war in terms of size and length of service.

It was Tommy Takeuchi’s idea to print the book, and he got the job. It was always his hope to reprint the souvenir volume for libraries and museums.

He even knew where the money would come from. Though he had first opposed redress from the American government to interned Japanese, he later changed his mind.

“He said the only way that Uncle Sam really can mean it is if it costs cash,” remembered his daughter, Tomiko. So Tommy Takeuchi accepted his $20,000 redress check with the intention of reprinting the book that recorded his and his family’s incarceration. He died in 1990 before the task was done, but his children picked up the threads of his life and did it for him in 1995.

Before he died, Tommy Takeuchi reflected on the events at Minidoka as a blessing in disguise that saw Japanese-Americans accepted as fellow citizens. He saw his struggle as a forerunner of civil rights and ended his statement with the fervent wish that “people of all nations, all races and all colors can live happily together, united by a bond of mutual respect, true understanding and a love of freedom.”

In March of 1950, the Gresham Troutdale chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League was founded with 42 members signing up. Gresham resident Henry Kato was a member for more than 50 years.

After he retired from farming, he worked to preserve things Japanese, including the Japanese Ancestral Society, and driving the bus for a Japanese Loaves and Fishes program.

Beyond that he was a member of the Gresham Elks, the Greater Gresham Board of Realtors, the Japanese Garden Society and the Portland Chrysanthemum Society. He served on the initial Mt. Hood Community College Citizens Advisory Committee, the Gresham hospital committee and the Japanese history committee of the Gresham Historical Society.

He was asked by Gresham Mayor Al Myers in 1975 to find a Japanese city to join as a Sister City, and in 1977 Gresham linked with Ebetsu, Japan, in a Sister City celebration in Main City Park.

The relationship opened the way for Gresham’s approach to the Japanese microchip industries and the eventual arrival in Gresham of Fujitsu Microelectronics, now Microchip Technologies.

Henry Kato was decorated in 1986 by the emperor of Japan for promoting friendly relations between Japan and the United States.

In 1988 he was among a number of Japanese-Americans and other Gresham citizens who gathered at Gresham Pioneer Cemetery to dedicate a memorial marker on the grave of Miyo Iwakoshi, the first Japanese person to settle in Oregon at Orient. The grave had previously been marked only with a Japanese cedar tree.
Alice Smith grows up with Gresham

Think of her granddaughter's Volvo as a time machine. With 100-year-old Alice Trimble Judd Smith in the right-hand seat, the years are stripped away on Southeast 282nd Avenue.

Still sharp-eyed, Alice sorts the old houses from the new along Gresham's eastern edge and sounds the names of those who lived in those farmhouses when she was little — Elliott, Hillyard, Beadle.

She was a baby when Gresham was born. At age 100 — trim, pretty, well-coiffed and dressed fit to kill — she's still a babe, the "centerfold" of this Gresham centennial edition.

She is the child who walked a mile in the snow to get to school. The girl who posed coquettishly for her graduation picture. The pretty young woman swept away by a handsome fellow at the dance. The young mother widowed when his truck blew up.

The single mom working in the local variety store and raising her little boy through the Depression.

Born May 13, 1904, in Nebraska, she was the middle of nine children of William Esmon and Carrie Prettyman Trimble. Her family moved to the area in 1909, when the newly-minted town of Gresham was only 4 years old. More precisely, the Trimbles were suburbanites, making their home in Gillis, a stop on the Mount Hood Railway at the corner of Southeast 282nd Avenue and Orient Drive.

The trolley car was handy. "With 11 of us, there was no way you could get in a car and go to town in those days. Even if we'd had a car," she says. But Gillis was well served with the Elliott store and another small market at the corner, and Gresham was the big town where you traveled only occasionally.

Once when she was ill, her father drove her to Gresham to the doctor. And in 1918 she unwittingly carried the flu bug back to Gillis on the trolley car. The epidemic, which killed thousands that winter, spread to her whole family. All of them lay in sickbeds in the living room parlor, barely able to care for themselves.

Alice and her siblings walked along the railroad track to attend the four-room Orient School.
It is a great honor to be the mayor of Gresham as the City celebrates its 100th anniversary. As we take this opportunity to look back and remember our beginnings as a rural community and reflect on Gresham's growth today, one strength that has remained constant throughout the past century is our spirit of community. The pride and commitment of the townspeople in 1905 to make Gresham a great place to live is no less than the ongoing commitment of today's citizens to do the same. It has always been this sense of community that makes Gresham such a wonderful place to live and do business. Together, we will continue to make Gresham a desirable place to work, live and play for our families today and for future generations.

— Charles J. Becker, Mayor
Waves of Immigrants

Gresham has always had a problem with labor. There simply never were enough people in town to pick the crops that were grown on the farmlands around the community.

After W.W. Cotton first introduced raspberry growing to the area in 1900, the community was faced with two problems, how to process the crop, a problem solved by forming Gresham Fruit Growers and building a cannery in 1914, and how to pick the crop.

The Cotton farm and many other large operations, made kind of a party out of the berry harvest, inviting families from other areas to come to Gresham and camp out, pick berries, make a little money and enjoy the summer.

Berry farms developed followings, whole groups of friends and family who arrived for the harvest and departed when the crop was in. The Cotton farm (the main house still stands on West Powell Boulevard) was famous for weekend concerts and entertainment provided for the workers.

These social events were the highlight of the season and worked much in the same way that Gresham's old Campground had been a place to meet and greet. Likely one of the side products of the berry harvest was a crop of new marriages.

The Japanese

As berry acreages grew and harvest season became more intense, farmers looked to immigrants to help with the harvest. Among the first of those were the Japanese.

The area's first Japanese immigrant, Miyo Iwakoshi of Orient, came in about 1875 with Alexander McKinnon, who built a sawmill at Orient. Iwakoshi's daughter, Tama, married Shintaro Takaki in 1885 in a ceremony believed to be Oregon's first wedding of a Japanese couple. Shintaro Takaki became a labor contractor, responsible for bringing thousands of Japanese to the West Coast where they scattered to work in fields and forests.

The Japanese, like many immigrants who came after them, provided a dependable labor force only until they could go to work for themselves. Though exclusion laws forbid the Japanese from becoming citizens, or to own property, they established their own farms on rented land and by the late 1920s were thriving to such a degree that newspapers ran articles — largely prompted by jealous farmers — on the danger of the Japanese success. Long before the name was applied to

Above: Miyo Iwakoshi, first Japanese settler in Orient, is shown celebrating her birthday in Portland.

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Immigrants: Dust bowl refugees had ‘found paradise’

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

The attackers of Pearl Harbor in World War II, the newspaper used the term “yellow peril” to describe dangers inherent in this new minority.

With the Japanese farming on their own, and needing to hire their own pickers, the area’s farms relied on local school children and their parents as well as a new brand of migrants, people forced out of the Dust Bowl of the Midwest by dirt and the poverty of The Depression.

The ‘Okies’

Often called “Okies.” though they were not all from Oklahoma, the dust bowl refugees came in 1930, dirt poor and with passels of kids. They were a striking parallel of the first travelers on the Oregon Trail a century before, except that these pioneers came in old trucks and cars with mattresses located in the back.

These new immigrants thought they had landed in Eden. Sick of blowing dust and the grit of poverty, they

TURN TO IMMIGRANTS, PAGE 52

Bush family survives accident on way to Oregon in 1920s

John and Mary Bush, in a story told often by their children, had a new Chevrolet truck in 1926 when they came west. Weary of the drought in Oklahoma, they sold all they had to buy the truck because they had nine children with them.

The truck had high sideboards, so John Bush arched bows over the top, much like a covered wagon, and stretched canvas over the bows to provide shelter. The family picked their own cotton for a mattress Mary Bush made to fit in the truck bed over the top of boxes, trunks and other family possessions. Over the mattress was a feather bed, made from the down of the family’s geese. The children who could not fit into the cab, usually seven or more, rode belly down on the mattress, snug under the feather bed, peering out the back of the truck.

John Bush had built a chuck box on the back, similar to the ones used by ranch cooks on chuck wagons. The lid dropped down to form a table and provisions were bought at grocery stores along the way.

Near Roswell, N.M., the truck slipped on a wet and muddy road, went over the side and rolled upside down, pinning most of the children underneath the truck.

In the kind of super-human effort that we now know is fueled by adrenaline, the parents, with the children pushing from underneath the load, managed to shove the truck over on its side so the youngsters could scramble free.

One son, his face buried in the featherbed, was almost blue from suffocation. Their saviors were a group of men traveling by bus who were members of the Odd Fellows Lodge. Spotting John Bush’s Odd Fellows lapel pin, the lodge gentlemen got out of their bus and into the muck and righted the truck.

The family wound up in East County where they picked berries to get a start.

— The Outlook, Feb. 27, 1988

Alice: Worked sorting berries, later at a dime store

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“It was a mile,” she said, “and we had a lot of snow in those days, so high that it drifted over the fence. At that time we had no clothes for snow. We’d put our dad’s socks over our shoes and go out to play. When you got inside your clothes were wet and there was no place to dry clothes except around the stove.”

Her father, like most area residents, had a small piece of land, big enough for a cow or two and a garden so that he could keep his brood in milk and vegetables. But William Trimble “worked out,” for the cash to buy groceries. He drove a team of horses — “Beautiful horses, and they minded him,” she remembered — to carry supplies for the construction of the Boll Run pipeline.

Alice watches the road ahead, once her granddaughter, Patty Patterson, crosses the intersection at Orient Drive. Three fir trees stand sentinel in front of the old house. Valerie Greenaway, a retired Orient school teacher, welcomes Alice’s visits to the 1880 house that is now hers.

Once years ago, Alice and several of her sisters stopped by. “They stood in the living room and argued about where things were,” Valerie laughed.

This time, there is no one to fight with. “I think it used to be gray,” Alice says of her childhood home. “But I don’t remember for sure, and there is no one to ask.”

“My mother had 11 children in 13 years,” she said. Two of the children in a set of triplets died.

“I used to climb up to the top of the barn,” Alice says, pointing at the steep roof looming out back of the old house, “and then I’d slide all the way down and jump at the edge of the roof.”

She remembers how the house changed when her family gave up their kerosene lamps for new Coleman lanterns that burned with a mantle, “a light so bright we thought we were in heaven.”

By the time she was ready for Gresham High, where she played basketball as a freshman, Alice’s family was living in town. Her brother-in-law ran the Yes Service Station. After her sophomore year, Alice went to Portland to study at Behnke-Walker Business College.

She could still walk the streets of Gresham and tell you what was where when she worked there.

In 1923 she met Elmer Judd at a dance, married him and moved away to Oregon City.

They had a son, Bob. On Oct. 28, 1931, Judd was driving a truck delivering slab wood when a neighbor asked him to bring blasting caps and dynamite on a return trip.

Judd put the blasting caps in his shirt pocket and the dynamite on the seat. The engine caught fire and came up through the floorboards, and his truck blew up.

Left a young widow with a small boy, Alice returned to Gresham. It was the Depression, but with her husband’s insurance money, she was better off than most. She set to work, first at the cannery where she sorted berries and then at Hepp’s Racket Store on Main Avenue, the equivalent of a dime store in those days.

“They sold school supplies and everything imaginable,” she remembers. “Little stuff.” She made $19.50 a week and worked six and one-half days.

She and Bob rented places to live and could enjoy small luxuries. “At that time a pork chop was a nickel and you get a nice little roast for 50 cents. Two Sundays each month I cooked dinner, and all the unemployed guys came. But I only cooked two Sundays. I couldn’t afford to feed them all.”

In 1934 she met her second husband, Wallace Smith, at a dance. She went dancing almost every Saturday night. “I’ve danced much, much farther than I’ve ever walked,” she smiles.

Alice, who wore high heels until she was close to 70, remembers those days. She had cotton dresses, maybe one silk one. “And if you had to break in a pair of shoes — they weren’t soft like they are now — it would be terrible.”

When she became fearful of falling, she made the decision to quit wearing her high heels. But she didn’t have the heart to throw them away. “I looked at them for a year,” she giggled.

Her daughter Sharon was born to her second marriage. She and Smith divorced, and she moved to Portland, where she made a living owning apartments. She never married again. She has always been a knitter and still wears beautiful knit dresses and suits that she made.

Her son, Bob, died at 68. Her daughter lives in Dayton. She has 10 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren. Each of her grandchildren takes a month to be responsible for the cleaning and care of her Portland apartment. She used to invite each of those children to spend a weekend with her on their birthdays.

“But I know a lot of people who were nice to their grandchildren and never heard from them. I am very lucky,” she says.

She celebrated her 100th birthday last May with a host of friends and relatives. She will be 101 in May.

“When I think of people being 100, I think of old people,” she says, shaking her head. “And I don’t feel old.”
Immigrants: ‘Okies’ canned produce to ward off hunger

From Mexico to Gresham

The certificates, the awards and a photo are all framed and hanging on the wall of the home near Legacy Mount Hood Hospital that Juan Zurita, 39, and his wife, Fliberta Hernandez, purchased a year ago.

The photo, taken by Judith Arden, his co-worker at J. Frank Schmidt & Son, shows a grinning Zurita, dressed in stocking cap and cold weather gear, sitting at a desk. Over his head, Arden superimposed the words, Juan Zurita, foreman.

“He really is good people,” says Arden, who describes Zurita as a progressive thinker.

Zurita’s home is proof of that. His childhood home in Santa Maria, Oaxaca, was, he remembers, about 6-by-10-feet with a dirt floor, where he, his widowed mother and two brothers slept. Zurita grabs his back dramatically, to describe how the rough floor would begin to dig in after a couple hours. His daughters, two of whom are teenagers, have heard the story before. They are polite, but move on.

“Two bathrooms,” Zurita grins, speaking of the new house. Damned handy, since the couple has three daughters, which calls for a lot of time in front of a mirror.

When he was 18, and with no hope of making money anywhere else, Zurita did what he had to get to the United States. He and the Immigration and Naturalization Service played ping-pong back and forth across the border at Tijuana. He would work for a while in California. He and others would be rounded up and dumped across the border.

“You would have no money, so you would try to eat until you could find a way back,” he said. He and other illegal workers mined out small caves in the rocks on hillsides. They covered their lairs with plastic and dirt, putting plants on top so they could not be found. The earthen cubbyholes had room for two.

He was sleeping on the earth again.

He would return to Oaxaca for a time, and then come back to the U.S. because there was no money to be earned in Mexico.

“You cannot make enough to survive, or for your family,” Juan says. “I could make better money here and have some money for my mother.”

He arrived in Oregon in 1984, pruning Christmas trees with a machete. He worked at Sandy Farms, living eight to a one-room shack. “But it was not so bad,” he said, remembering that he has slept in much worse places.

His big break came when President Ronald Reagan made him and other migrant workers legal so long as they could prove a work record in the United States. By then, he had been at Moller’s Nursery for 10 years and was able to establish the record that gave him the rights of residency.

His wife came in 1989 and their oldest daughter, Liticia, who recently celebrated her 15th birthday with the traditional party, was born here. She was followed by Natalie, 12, and Lupita, 9.

Five years ago, Zurita studied and passed his citizenship test. He went to work for the Schmidt firm at the Hood Acres farm in Boring more than six years ago and now, as a foreman, is in charge of 20-30 people. His co-worker is an Anglo.

“We are a team,” he said. “When I need help, he helps me. When he needs help, I give help to him.”

Zurita has mastered English and his Spanish skills are invaluable to his Anglo co-workers.

“I speak English. I speak Spanish. I know the job,” he said.

He measures his success in the things we all count, a huge television, gifts under the Christmas tree, reliable transportation.

But most symbolic is a row of shiny toy cars, lined up across the top of the monster TV. There are seven of them.

When he was little and lived in that dirt-floored house in Santa Maria, all he ever wanted was one toy car, just one.

Zurita returns to Mexico for vacations and to visit his mother. He sends her $150 a month “so she can live.” She is not happy, he says, that he will never return permanently.

“Here is my life,” he says.
Immigrants: Many berry farms turned into nurseries

Continued from page 52 -

Bridge. Once the private clubhouse of the Portland Automobile Club and now the home of Junki and Linda Yoshida, Viking Park was then a public picnic ground.

With the war over, the soldiers returned and launched their families, providing the scores of children who grew up to pick East Multnomah County's strawberry, raspberry and bean crops. Working in the fields, with berry money in the fall to buy clothes and new shoes, was a constant.

Through the 1940s and 1950s, farmers such as Carl and Irene Lyski of Gresham, relied on students from Gresham High School to pick their crops. The Lyskis, who had as many as 600 pickers in a single day, described their Gresham high school crews "as the cream of the crop."

By the 1960s and 1970s, farmers were cultivating platoon leaders who specialized in recruiting student pickers from Portland schools and arrived each day with a busload of kids to do the work.

This resulted in a unique type of supervision, a combination of being a boss and a babysitter.

The Asians

All that changed in the 1970s when children were banned from the fields because of the chemicals used on the crops.

For a time in the mid-1970s, in the wake of the fall of Saigon, the Vietnamese, Lao and Cambodian immigrants bent to the harvest.

They were great pickers, the farmers raved, but they assimilated quickly and were gone from the fields in the course of a few years.

The ‘Winos’

In the 1960s, 70s and 80s, many farmers relied on residents of Portland’s skid row. Winos, they called them. The residents of skid row then were mostly alcoholics and not drug abusers. The sight of berry buses on Burnside in downtown Portland was common, the buses idling in the pre-dawn dark as workers stumbled aboard to doze their way to East Multnomah County.

Lee Larson, who grew up at the Gresham bus company owned by his father, Al Larson, learned to drive in grade school and at 11 was driving buses on the lot. The younger Larson remembered the morning there was an emergency and he “drove the bus to Portland in the early dawn to pick up a load of wino berry pickers on Burnside. The men on the street shook their heads when they saw a youngster driving the big bus,” he said.

The Latinos

In 1960, it was almost impossible to buy a package of tortillas in East Multnomah County.

In the 1970s with the children gone from the fields, Hispanic people, mostly Mexicans, began trickling in to do the work. The berry fields were no longer a crisis. Faced with competition from California, strawberry acreage was shrinking and mechanical pickers had been developed for at least some of the cane berry crops.

Many of the fields outside Gresham’s urban growth boundary had been put to work raising nursery stock to meet the huge demands of a growing housing market. Growers such as J. Frank Schmidt & Son and other pioneers in the industry realized that thousands of new homes would need landscaping.

These new Latino workers were needed to prune and bud, to dig and to plant, as well as to harvest.

In 1980, according to the Portland State University Center for Population Research, Gresham counted 528 Hispanic residents. In 1990 the number was 2,284. In 2000, 10,732, or 11.9 percent of Gresham’s population of 90,305 were Hispanic or Latino. Of those, the vast majority, 8,666, is Mexican.

Like the Japanese, the Dust Bowl farmers and the Asians before, they came here out of need, fleeing poverty, and are here to stay.
1950-1959: Conflict and Growth

Pride and honor: A hero’s story

Ted Harris of Gresham was a bona fide, All-American, blue-blooded, bull-headed war hero. Harris was the “last man out” of Korea in the prisoner of war repatriation following the Korean War. Gresham residents loved to tell the story of how the North Koreans had handcuffed, locked him in a truck, and then thrown him out of the territory, while Harris kicked and screamed and protested that he had never confessed to war crimes.

Harris, who died Sept. 5, 2003, and received a hero’s burial at the Air Force Academy, talked to news reporters dozens of times about his 14 months of torture, mental abuse and imprisonment at the hands of the North Koreans and then the Chinese. Most often in those interviews, he described himself as a former “stump and weed farmer” from Gresham, Oregon, a phrase reporters lapped up like cream. In the early days of psychological warfare, Harris was the poster boy of mental resistance. His experience resulted in a change of the U.S. code of military conduct and a job on training others in survival skills.

A member of a longtime Gresham farming family, Harris was a “swivel-hipped” player on the Gresham Gopher football team that lost a close match to Sandy, 14-13, in 1940. Such a feat would not happen again until 1995. By then, Harris was back in Gresham to talk about that first fall from grace, though the passage of more than 50 years and all that intervened made it seem more victory than a defeat.

When Harris held his arms just so, the white scars of the burns still showed. He was shot down three times in two wars. “You’d think by the third time I’d get it right,” he quipped.

A B-17 pilot in World War II, Harris twice crash-landed after his plane had been shot up. Both times he made it to safety. Back in the air during the Korean War, he was flying a B-29 reconnaissance plane when he, with nine crew members, was shot down in North Korea. He bailed out in darkness. His oxygen caught fire, and Harris landed with burns on his face, hands, throat and back.

No one heard from Harris from the time his plane went down July 4, 1952, until he emerged, vociferous, scrawny and shouting, at Panmunjom on Sept. 6, 1953.

“I never doubted he was alive,” said his wife, Betty. She kept hope alive at home, caring for their daughter, Sandy, and writing her husband a letter every single day, stacked and awaiting his return.

Harris remembered little of his early imprisonment. He was carried from village to village for eight days while people cursed and taunted him. His wounds overwhelmed him, and he woke up three weeks later living in a trench dug into the side of a hill.

Brainwashing came into the American lexicon during the Korean War. It was important to the Koreans that their prisoners admit to war crimes.

Harris was physically abused and suffered extreme pain because of the lack of medical care. He was starved and kept in filthy conditions. But the worst of his treatment was mental. His captors prodded him day after day looking for weak spots, threatening his family, promising him better living conditions. He lived in mud-walled cells smaller than his bathroom, survived hours in a two-and-one-half-foot square “solitary” box, and forced to sit motionless day after day.

“I was scared to death that anything I might do would help the enemy and bring the Russians into the conflict, and that would be World War III,” Harris said. Though many prisoners would confess, he never gave in.

Instead, he withdrew mentally into fantastical daydreams. He built a house, nail by nail, board by board, from a plan that Betty had cut out of a magazine. He started a cattle ranch when beef prices were up. It “made the King Ranch in Texas look like a sharecropper’s outfit,” he remembered.

“It was important to be successful,” he would say later.

Every once in a while he would get so caught up in his mental world that he smiled and chuckled.

“It drove the guards nuts,” he said. Twice sent to solitary in the cramped box, balled up with his head between his knees, he survived by turning himself off. The last occasion — 14 hours while his captors beat on the outside of the box — was like living in a bass drum, he remembered. He emerged temporarily deaf and unable to walk for many days.

And once he was forced to dig his own grave, then stand before a firing squad that fired blank rounds.

Harris clung to small victories. He managed to prevent his captors from seeing a long thumbnail, which he sharpened on a rock and used as a knife. When he got his weekly ration of garlic, he would carefully shred it with his knifethumb and insert it into his bread.

“It was pretty darned good,” he remembered.

He developed a series of painful boils on his back. Left untreated, he squirmed constantly against the wall of his hut to break them and relieve the pressure.

At the worst of those times, he was introduced to another American prisoner who had confessed. Harris was shown a clean tent and clothes and good food. The other American, a man from Oregon whom Harris has not seen since, told him how good things would be if he confessed.

“But I could see in his eyes that it was not true,” Harris said. “There is no such thing as going along with them. Going along is the first step to surrender.”

Where did the determination come from? How did it lodge in Ted Harris? Harris, who said he was not a religious man, believed some of his rock-solid core came from his...
1950-1959: CONFLICT AND GROWTH

Hero: He never signed off on lies

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54

father, also a Ted, who was a construction supervisor on bridge, dam and pipeline projects.

"I've said it many times since his death — but never to
him," Harris said wiping a tear away. "I respected him
above all men."

Isolated, without news, never knowing that the war was
over, Harris was first kept in North Korea and later sent to
China. One day, without warning, he was issued a new blue
suit, fed a pretty good meal and placed on a train.

"My crew was in that same car," he said, "but we
weren't allowed to speak, and most of us didn't recognize
each other because we had changed so much."

Harris was down to 129 pounds from 204. Forbidden to
talk, he and the others rode silently through the dark,
ever knowing whether they were headed farther north or
south.

They crossed the Yalu River on a long bridge and by
mid-afternoon were at Freedom Village, an exchange point
for prisoners of war. There in front of newspaper reporters
and the world, Harris heard his captors announce that he
and his crew admitted engaging in biological warfare in
China. Harris went nuts, yelling that it was a "damn lie."

His words made history, "If I can't go back with my self-
respect, I won't go back at all."

He refused to go home until he had a document "delet-
ing all that stuff."

A truck hauled his crew away. His captors were forced
to set up his tent again and keep him. They fed him again.
They got nervous and began to look at their watches.

They tried again, ultimately jumping him, handcuffing
him to a truck bed and hauling him cross-country to the
exchange site. When the truck mired, they loaded him
aboard a jeep. In the struggle, Harris and his captors man-
aged to inflict damage on the jeep.

"It was a new Russian Jeep," he remembers. When the
driver saw the windshield go, Harris recalled, "it looked
like he was gonna cry." Ted Harris was delivered into U.S.
hands, the last prisoner out of Korea, steaming, belligerent
and pugnacious.

Once at Freedom Village, Harris sought out the com-
manding officer, loudly protesting that he had never con-
fessed.

"Then what the hell are you worrying about?" the officer
asked and directed him to a chaplain.

Betty Harris was visiting her husband's family on
Vancouver Island when she got word that her husband had
been seen on television.

He never read her letters, wanting to put those days
behind him. Betty burned the letters, a record of her every
day for 14 months. He finished his career in the military,
retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 1975.

Even in retirement, Harris came to a boil easily. He and
his good buddy from high school, Ross Morgan, had loud
arguments over politics. No matter. Morgan named his son
Ted during the time that Harris was playing his mind
games with the Koreans and the Chinese.

This story was in The Outlook Nov. 4, 1995.
1950-1959: CONFLICT AND GROWTH

1953 — Hillary and Tenzing the first to climb Mount Everest.

1954 — First children inoculated with antipolio serum.

1954 — Dea's In and Out opened.

1954 — Gresham built an armory "way out on Division Street."


1955 — Popular songs: "Yellow Rose of Texas" and "Davy Crockett."

1956 — Prince Rainier of Monaco married Grace Kelly.

1956 — Gresham Mayor Dr. H.H. Hughes ends 16 years in office.

1957 — Dr. Seuss wrote "The Cat in the Hat."

1957 — Paratroopers sent to desegregation crisis in Little Rock, Ark.

1957 — "Beat" and "beatin" defined the "Beat Generation."

1958 — Russians launched Sputnik.

1959 — Gresham's hero was All-American quarterback Bob Schlicreid, who led the University of Washington in the Rose Bowl.

1959 — Gresham opened a new 52-bed hospital.


1959 — Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba.

Dea's longburgers still satisfy

Cruising, as old fogies know it, ended in Gresham in 1970 when Dea's In and Out moved from Powell Boulevard to 755 E. Burnside. The police chief didn't like it much, saying it was harder to keep track of the kids in town.

"We were Arnold's on 'Happy Days,'" says Mike Sparks, the second generation of the Dea's In and Out dynasty. "Happy Days" continue 50 years later because Dea's still cranks out 400 to 500 custom-cooked hamburgers a day.

Old ones who remember dragging Powell are now the same people who've spent a lifetime wolfing Dea's longburgers, cruising Powell. Chrome-trimmed satellites orbiting Dea's. Exhaust flames colored pink from the glow of taillights. Elvis singing "Love Me Tender" until the record in Dea's jukebox wore clean through.

The Sparks family celebrated 50 years as a burger emporium in 2003, marking the April day in 1953 when Dea and Evelyn Sparks bought the tiny drive-in on Powell, just across from the Hood Theater. Many accounts in their own files say 1954, but maybe that was when it caught on. Either way, now that Gresham is turning 100, its citizens have dined at Dea's for more than half its civic life.

Dea's lived through Elvis and on to the Beatles, past fuzzy dice and into stretch pants, from cherry cokes to straight Coke and Marlboros. Then it was a jukebox. Now it is canned music and state Lottery Keno. Then it was cruising, now you sit down and eat, three meals a day.

But the constant is the rectangular hamburger still on a fresh-baked bun with toasty edges from the grill, still tasting just as it did when you were 15. The milk shakes, homemade. The French fries, hot. The menu listed in black plastic letters against the board.

It takes work to stay the same, Mike Sparks says. "The only real problem is that ingredients you use in things, cheese brands or pickle companies, change. For years we used Nalley's, but you can't get it anymore. When pickles changed, I wound up trying 15 different brands of pickles to find something we were happy with."

Above: From left, Dea and Evelyn Sparks, along with their sons Pat and Mike, sit in a booth at Dea's In & Out.

The 'Happy Days' of Gresham opened in 1953 on Powell Boulevard. It later moved to Burnside.

Does he still eat the house burger? "I've got one in my hand right now," he says.

Dea Sparks, 78, is still there every day, still slim-hipped, wearing a crisp shirt with a hair cut pretty much the same as it was then. Evelyn Sparks, 75, is a daily presence, too. You wonder if she wore her apron in 1996 when the two celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Dea's.

"He works in the office. He gave up the restaurant," Mike says of his father. Three generations of the family work at Dea's, including sons Mike and Pat Sparks. A third son, Gary, works and lives in Tucson, Ariz. Pat's son, Clint, who bakes the buns, and Mike's daughter, Kerri, who runs the waitress crews, are the third generation. The fourth generation, Mike says, is too little to work, though he remembers a childhood of peeling potatoes.

That first restaurant was a "little bitty thing," maybe 20 feet long. "It looked like some kind of trailer, but it wasn't," Mike says.

Dea Sparks had worked as a baker at Keller's Pastry Shop on Powell where they made the long buns. He shaped his burgers to fit the buns. Other places have rectangular hamburgers, but Dea's copyrighted the longburger name. When Keller closed his bakery, Dea's bought the old pans and took up making their own buns.

The first hangout was technically in what is now Powell Boulevard. The street was widened in the early 1970s, requiring a move from Powell to Burnside. For a while when both restaurants still existed, there was the old Dea's and the new Dea's. There was once a Dea's in Sandy and the start of what seemed like a chain, but they ran out of relatives to run the empire, so they settled into the Burnside location.

In 1995, they expanded, adding a bar and a restaurant with a different menu.

In 2000, they expanded again, remodeling the bakery where some of the original longburger bun pans are still in use, expanding the bar and building a bigger walk-in cooler.

In peak times, 40 people work there; some are "kids" who used to cruise Powell. Terry Hill works the breakfast shift three days a week and has been there more than 30 years. She met her husband at Dea's, and both daughters worked there at one time.

The breakfast regulars have their favorites, and they show up regular as any alarm clock. But it is the longburger that ends the day, served at the table, or handed out in a paper sack at the drive-in counter.

They don't call it cruising anymore. They call it gridlock. But the taste of a Dea's hamburger is still the same.

Teacher heads for Washington in 1954

Congresswoman Edith Green 1910-1987

Edith Starrett Green, a schoolteacher turned politician, represented the 3rd Congressional District for 20 years. She went to Washington in 1954.

Green carried her passion for education from the schoolroom to the nation in a career that began in 1946 and continued well past her 1974 retirement.

The federal building in Portland bears her name, and Portland’s Greenhouse project, a shelter for street kids, was also named for her.

Prior to beginning her political career, she lived in East Multnomah County, where she raised her sons. After her death at age 77 from pancreatic cancer, her remains were buried at Mountain View Cemetery near Corbett.

Her son, James Green, a Gresham real estate broker and former Gresham High School teacher, said at the time of his mother’s death that she would be remembered for her work in equal rights and education.

“Lots of things were important to her, but those were special issues,” he said.

Sen. Mark Hatfield said that Green introduced “more education-related legislation than any other person” during her time in office. She also supported equal pay for equal work and opposed the buildup of American forces in Vietnam.

Born in Trent, S.D., the daughter of schoolteachers, she came to Oregon at age 5 and received her teaching certificate from Oregon Normal School at Monmouth.

In 1933 she married Arthur Green, whom she divorced after a 20-year marriage. Her aide, Gresham resident Stan Swan, said Arthur Green could not tolerate political life.

Swan, who was Green’s voice in the district while the congresswoman was in Washington, D.C., said, “Mrs. Green once told me that it was my job to smooth the feathers that she ruffled.”

Edith Green’s first step into politics was in 1946 when she was the state legislative chairwoman for the Oregon Congress of Parents and Teachers and lobbied the legislature in Salem.

In 1954, Green, a Democrat, beat journalist Tom McCall, later Oregon governor, in a hard-fought race for Oregon’s 3rd Congressional District. She held office for 10 terms.

Her work as a champion of education brought her more than 30 honorary degrees and dozens of awards. She returned to Oregon to be a professor of government affairs at Warner Pacific College.

She served on the State Board of Higher Education, and Linfield College established a professorship in her honor.

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1950-1959: CONFLICT AND GROWTH

Before the multiplex, it was the picture show

Gresham residents have gone to the movies for just about as long as there has been a Gresham. Gresham resident Paulette Dowsett-Ewalt remembered that silent movies started in Portland about 1906 and in Gresham about 1910.

"But there was just one showing a week — on a Saturday night — I think Howard Van Duesen owned the enterprise and Mabel Winters played the piano to accompany the movie," Ewalt wrote in "Gresham, Stories of Our Past, campground to city."

Dan Murphy, whose father owned a tavern on Main Avenue, remembered that the first Gresham theater was next door to his father’s saloon, on the west side of Main Avenue between First and Second streets.

In 1935, Gertrude Van Horn wrote about theaters for the second edition of the Gresham Historical Society History, saying that the Stockton Brothers built a theater on the south side of Powell Boulevard. Called the Gresham Theater, it was leased to Rose and Harry Moyer, who later bought it.

It was built on a steep grade overlooking Johnson Creek so that the 500-seat auditorium sloped and no one’s view was blocked.

The Moyers sold 10-cent bags of popcorn and nickel candy bars, Van Horn said.

Bob Mills, who with his parents, Bob and Marge Mills, ran theaters in Gresham until the closure of Gresham Cinemas in 1999, remembers the old Powell Boulevard theater.

"To my knowledge it was a one-screen theater, as were all of them back in those days. The multiplex age was not upon us yet," wrote Mills in reminiscence for this centennial publication.

Mills’ father, also named Bob, worked there for a brief time and also at the new Hood Theatre, built by the Moyer family in 1949. For a brief time the old and new theaters were operated simultaneously with the elder Mills working at both, but eventually the old theater was closed. It sat for a long time for rent, then the interior was destroyed in a fire and the hulk of the building was torn down in the 1970s demolition of the business district on the south side of Powell. The site today overlooks Main City Park.

Bob Mills and his mother Marge stand in front of the Mt. Hood Theater, which they ran for 13 years through 1962.

Getting the Gossip

Marge Mills worked all over Gresham in the 1960s and 1970s and once had a job in a beauty shop on First Street. "I'd run home down the alley at noon to eat my lunch," she said, "and to watch 'As the World Turns.' One day I was sitting at the desk listening to the customers confide in their operators. They would tell their beauty operators the most secret things, and I said to myself, 'What am I going home for? And I started packing my lunch to eat at my desk and never watched 'As the World Turns' again.'"

Mills’ parents, Bob and Marge, opened the Mount Hood Theater as co-general managers and ran it for the Moyer family for 13 years through 1962. It was a true family operation.

"As they grew old enough, all my older sisters worked at the theater in some capacity," Mills said. "I wasn't born until 1954 and was very young in those days. As far as my own contribution, I just recall helping get the theater heat fired up in the boiler room prior to opening. I remember being so afraid as we walked through that dark auditorium toward the boiler room in front. Being an imaginative child, I always envisioned that there were some scary movie monsters probably still lurking in the darkness at the back of the theater somewhere."

The Hood, Mills said, was the hub of all Gresham teen social activity in the early 1950s with Dea's In & Out just across the street and the Polar King Drive-In just a few blocks east.

"Powell was just a two-lane street at the time, and cruisers ruled the road on Friday and Saturday nights. They would cruise up to the Polar King restaurant, turn around and come back again. The parking lots of the Hood Theatre, Dea's and Polar King were popular hangouts for the young people of that era. It was like a scene right out of 'America Graffiti' or 'Happy Days.'"

"One of my older sisters used to love to go out and clean the front window glass or box office windows so that she could keep up with what was going on with the cruising scene. That same sister received her first kiss around the corner and up on the ramp leading toward the theater's auditorium. Teenagers used to like to use the theater's 'cry room' as a 'makeout room.'"

Movie theaters then had no commercials. Almost every showing was a double feature with a cartoon, and often a newscast preceded the previews. Mills remembers the most popular films of that period as "The Shaggy Dog," "Flubber," "Son of Flubber," ("Yes," he says, "they even had sequels back then") and "101 Dalmatians."

The Mills family left the movie business for a time but returned 15 years later, in 1977, when Gresham's first multiplex, Gresham Cinemas, was built on East Burnside Road, directly across the street from Dunkin' Donuts and K-Mart. The site is now a furniture store. Part of the Luxury Theatre chain, Gresham Cinemas was owned by Tom Moyer, son of Rose and Harry, who built the Hood Theater.

By then grown up, Bob Mills joined his father and mother in running the new picture show, first as assistant manager under their leadership, later as manager. It was a 15-year run, a type of continuity nearly unheard of..."
Show: ‘It was a magical time’

That kind of money attracted an armed robbery one night that saw the younger Mills face down a gunman who had a weapon pointed at his head. Proud of management techniques that moved the cash out of the theater quickly, Mills kept telling the robber that the big money was already gone and that he would be disappointed with the piddling $150 he would get.

Mills remembers his biggest hit at Gresham Cinemas as the original “Beverly Hills Cop,” with Eddie Murphy. His mother’s favorite film has always been “Gone With the Wind.”

The elder Mills retired in May of 1999; he died in 2002. The younger saw Gresham Cinemas closed in September of 1999. He worked at the new Stark Street Cinema and later the Clackamas Cinemas until last spring.

The best times were in Gresham, he says. “It was a magical time… On behalf of the Mills family, we sincerely thank the Gresham community for their tremendous support during the Gresham Cinemas and Mount Hood Theatre days.”

Zim’s, where live turkeys were pitched off the roof

Zimmerman’s 12-Mile Store sprouted from a small corner store at the 12-Mile Corner, the intersection of Stark Street and Fairview Road.

Just a country crossroads, the store was a handy stop along the way until Ada and Carl Zimmerman leased it in 1938 from Edward and Minnie Aylsworth.

Carl Zimmerman was an entrepreneur before the word came into common usage, and he bought the store in 1943, expanding it, adding tower and carilion and more space until finally it covered an acre of ground under one roof and was East Multnomah County’s first supermarket.

Zimmerman, or Zim, as he called himself, advertised extensively and always added a little “Zim Says” message to his ads.

He was always pulling one stunt or the other to draw people to his store and once, no kidding, pitched live turkeys off the roof for people who wanted a free turkey dinner. Santa came to Zim’s in a helicopter.

A 1950s snowdrift was named Mount Zim, and prizes were given to those who could guess when it melted. You could get, and redeem, S&H Green Stamps there.

Zim had a crazy whirling neon sign built that was the talk of the countryside.

Carl Zimmerman died in 1959, and his wife, Ada, ran it for many years. By then, large grocery chains had arrived in East Multnomah County and the business was different.

But Carl Zimmerman was the first, and unforgettable.
1950-1959: CONFLICT AND GROWTH

A century of Koreans in Oregon

Rockie Park is a tiny woman, but she's made of the stuff you build bridges with — bridges to span generations and nations:

She and her husband, Harry, founders of Park's Nursery east of Gresham, are mainstays of the Korean Society of Oregon. The two took their vows in November 2003 at the creation of an endowment fund to mark 100 years since Koreans first came to Oregon.

Their son, Rod Park, operator of the nursery and a Metro councilor, donated $50,000 on behalf of the family. Donations from other Korean-Americans brought the endowment to $90,000 at its inception.

But the real wealth is in the memory of Rockie (Rak Soon) Park, 75, whose arrival in Oregon in 1949 put her in the right place and the right time to hear and remember the voices of Oregon's first-generation Koreans.

"I was in my early 20s. The ladies of the first generation were in their 50s and 60s," she remembered.

But difference in years did not matter because the women were linked by the language of their birth. The young Rak Soon gravitated toward the older women, who insisted in keeping the customs and holidays of their native country.

That memory is essential now in preparing a commemorative documentary marking a century of Koreans in Oregon.

One of the earliest to arrive was Harry Park's father, Kyung Soo Park, who came just after the turn of the century. But Harry Park, 85, admits up front that he is no authority.

"You want to know about Koreans, you ask her," he says with his characteristic grin, pointing to his wife. "Me, I don't know anything."

Harry Park is a native, born in Fairview. When he was about 6, his mother died and his father gathered a stair-step collection of nine children and moved to Idaho to be near family. They returned to East Multnomah County 53 years ago to buy the former Beadle farm on 282nd Avenue, right on Gresham's eastern boundary.

Rockie Park was born in Korea and schooled there under Japanese occupation that denied her the Korean customs and even her name, Rak Soon Lee. When attempts to be a teacher in her native land failed — she was young, she had no experience, she was a woman — she came to the Oregon.

Rak Soon Lee met Harry Park at a gathering of members of the Korean community.

"I thought he was a nut," she says. "He joked a lot, and he was like a comedian."

The couple has three boys and a daughter and now a fourth generation in a grandson, the child of son Douglas, a Gresham dentist. Thomas Park works for a pharmaceutical firm in Bothell, Wash., and Joyce Park is a graphic artist in San Jose, Calif.

The turn of world events and the aftermath of the Korean War brought a new generation of Korean orphans to the country and more continue to come. Denied her heritage by the Japanese occupation, Rockie Lee nurtures it here. In behalf of all Koreans, she keeps books and clippings, noting old names and old families in her records.

Harry Park credits Rockie with creation of the pom-pom or topiary nursery that stock is now so popular. His wife, he says, took the pruning shears to some unsold evergreens, forming pom-poms at the end of the branches. They sold like hotcakes.

Rockie had observed the technique on the bonsai plants in Korea, "only these are bigger," she says.

If she has regrets, it is that she never got to be a teacher.

"I ended up stuck on a farm," she says, with a half-smile and a nudge at her husband.

"How lucky can you be?" Harry Park says, making her laugh, just like she did when they met.

First comes love, then comes hospital

Courtship and marriage launch first hospital

It was a May courtship and an October wedding between Ben Doerksen and Lillian Pleasant that launched Gresham's first hospital in 1959.

Until then, ailing Gresham residents went to Portland when they were sick, though Gresham had a number of birthing centers or lying-in homes where babies were born. Gresham's retired florist, Jack Malcom, was born in such a home at Fifth and Main in downtown Gresham in 1924.

In 1934 Lillian Pleasant, a widow, purchased the first split-level house in Gresham on Hood Street, turning it into Wildwood Nursing Home. In 1954 she met Ben Doerksen, a building contractor, in Gresham scouting business opportunities.

The pair converted the nursing home to a hospital of 50 medical and 60 nursing beds, opening for business as Gresham General Hospital on Aug. 12, 1959.

The first baby, a girl, was delivered July 14, 1960.

An expansion in 1964 bumped the number of beds up to 113, and by 1965 the hospital was listed as the top taxpayer in Gresham. As a private enterprise, it paid taxes.

Gresham General added an ICU in 1968 and by its 10th birthday had 200 beds.

The Doerksens sold the hospital in 1971 to Metropolitan Hospital Inc. Oscar Gustafson, president of Metropolitan Hospitals, eventually would bring Gresham's hospital into the Legacy system.

1960-1969: Tumult And Transformation

‘60s bring big changes to Gresham

Widening of Powell made biggest visual difference in community

In the 1960s, against the backdrop of a violent change — civil rights demonstrations, assassinations, Vietnam, the Watts, Seaside and Oregon prison riots, the killings at Kent State, The Beatles visiting Oregon, and a flood, a windstorm and an earthquake — Oregon pioneered under Tom McCall, and Gresham prospered and changed.

In 1986, retired Chevrolet dealer Ross Fanning, who would leave nearly $2 million to Gresham parks, described the period in which he was a city councilor and business leader.

The greatest changes in Gresham history occurred in the 1960s and early 1970s beginning with widening Powell Boulevard through downtown Gresham, building downtown parking lots to enliven the Main Avenue business district, construction of a new sewer plant, creation of Main City Park and a shift by car dealers to properties "way out" on Powell Boulevard near the Burnside intersection.

Fanning and Chet McRobert, Ford dealer, flipped a coin to decide which side of the road they would take when they moved east on Powell.

Fanning had his new car agency open in time to show the 1965 Chevys. Fred Meyer dropped by on his way to his cabin on Mount Hood. "He said that if we would build a sewer line out in that direction, he would build on his property out there," Fanning said.

Gresham was forced to build a sewer when the old sewer plant on Johnson Creek could no longer cope with the waste from the Gresham cannery. The cannery had been the city's chief industry and was critical to the needs of surrounding farmers, so city fathers (the council was then all male) scurried to build a $750,000 sewer plant on the Columbia River. Ironically, the sewer that was built to save farming would lead to building on those very farm lands.

The change that would make the biggest visual difference in Gresham was the widening of Powell Boulevard and the demolition of a line of old stores and a theater that bordered the south side of Powell where Main City Park is now. Even the Corner Cafe, where Gresham's movers and shakers met to talk over news of the town, was demolished.

Looking back, Fanning said that he doubted such a decade would happen again "because people in Gresham in the 1960s were different than people in Gresham in the 1980s."

"Today," he said in 1986, "people sleep here and eat breakfast — sometimes they don't even eat breakfast, you see them headed for the freeway with their coffee cups — and then they go to work in Portland. In the '60s, people lived and worked here."

Among those living in Gresham were some of the players from the Portland Buckaroos, Western Hockey League favorites.

The 1960s brought Lee Irwin to town to buy The Gresham Outlook. Irwin jumped in with both feet, helping to found Mt. Hood Community College in 1966 and fighting city-county consolidation.

Right there with him was Betty Schieden, who had squired John Kennedy around when he visited Gresham.

The loss of the county fair saddened many Gresham residents. In 1967, the last fair was held on the Main Avenue grounds.

Multnomah County officials announced their intention to sell the fairgrounds, and the event was moved to the

"We wanted to do something that hadn't been done before..."
Fred Bonning, President, Center Oak Properties

Center Oak Properties has been a part of the Gresham Community since 1999. Developing the Gresham Station Shopping Center and our most recent addition, the Gresham Station Medical Plaza.

This one-of-a-kind Medical Center is a facility where you can see your physician, visit the state-of-the-art imaging center, and have a procedure performed in the Ambulatory Surgery Center. In addition, Gresham Station Medical Plaza is now the home of Rose City Breast Care, Hearts of Hope, Pain Relief Specialists NW, Adventist’s Physical Therapy Center, and some of the finest practitioners in Oregon.

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1960-1969: TUMULT AND TRANSFORMATION

Publisher set a lasting example

Lee Irwin
1919-1995

"He corrected the spelling and grammar in a letter to the Editor from a man who could only be described as an enemy. "It's not our job to make people look stupid," he said."

— Suzanne Martinson, former Outlook People Editor, now food editor of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

He signed his notes PPL, for Ples Lee Irwin, though not many people knew the odd first name of the man who was publisher of The Gresham Outlook for more than 20 years.

The epitome of the mild-mannered journalist, Lee Irwin conducted dogged fights in the editorial pages and in meeting rooms. He won most of his battles, the founding of Mt. Hood Community College and the fight against city-county consolidation. He lost the one over the Mount Hood Freeway.

"Two out of three isn't bad," he said at his retirement in 1982.

A die-hard sports fan who favored the purple of his University of Washington alma mater, Irwin came to Gresham in 1960 to purchase The Gresham Outlook and later The Sandy Post.

"I came to Gresham at just the right time," he would reflect in his retirement years. "It was just starting to grow. What a time to be here and run a newspaper."

Two years later Irwin's wife, Marcia, died, leaving him a single parent with five children, ages 16 to 5. He managed home and business by hiring a succession of housekeepers.

His daughter, Anne, taught her younger siblings to tie their shoes. Because she was left-handed, all the Irwin children learned to tie their shoes left-handed.

Irwin married again in 1968 to Bonnie Clowson, former secretary at Gresham High. In addition to newspaper work — Irwin wrote as many as 15 editorials a week — he was first reader of First Church of Christ Scientist, a board member of Portland's City Club, a member of the city-county charter commission, an eight-year member of the state fair board, president of the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and a member of the fire district budget committee.

It was in his Outlook office where he, Betty Schedeen and Marv Ogle met to discuss creating a Gresham college. His founding role at Mt. Hood Community College would make him a patron saint of the institution. He was a Ruhl Fellow in journalism at the University of Oregon. In the process he and his partner, Walt Taylor, built a small chain of Oregon newspapers.

His example would be a lasting influence on the journalists who worked for him and are now scattered across the nation.

Sadly, Irwin spent the last 10 years of his life in a care center struggling with memory loss and dementia. Though he often did not know family members, his daughter Victoria, a journalist and author, tells of a day that she came from New York to visit him.

He saw her coming down the hall, Victoria remembered, and looked up and said, "Here comes a newspaper woman."

Columbus Day Storm wreaks havoc

Gresham's Eastmont Lanes, a year-old bowling alley on Powell Boulevard, suffered some of the worst damage of the Oct. 12, 1962, Columbus Day Storm.

The south wind, described by Gresham weather historian George Miller as a "meteorological bomb," was the strongest storm to affect the Pacific Northwest in recent history, killing 24 people and costing, in 1962 dollars, more than $200 million. Wind gusts in Portland and other locations in the Willamette Valley were measured at over 100 mph, Miller wrote in his book "Pacific Northwest Weather."

A similar storm in 1880 took out Gresham's original Campground Grove.

In 1962 the winds hit the southeast wall of the new bowling alley, collapsing the roof.

"The wall gave way and fell exactly where our son, Johnny, had been only a minute before," owner Vera Peters said in a 1962 Outlook interview. "Then the roof started falling down. Objects were falling around us, furnaces, pipes, ceiling material everywhere."

The screen of the Division Street Drive-In Theater went down. Two trailers were demolished when fir trees fell in the Tall Firs Trailer Park at 15656 S.E. Division. An estimated 29,000 homes were without power. And hundreds of years of agriculture history were reduced to kindling as dozens of old barns blew over.

HISTORICAL SIDENOTE: JOHN DEERE PLANT COMES TO TOWN

May 1964 — A new John Deere plant was rising in the Rockwood industrial tract at Northeast 181st Avenue.

Outlook interview. "Then the roof started flying through the air and over our heads, objects were falling around us, furnace pipes, ceiling material wires."

The screen of the Division Street Drive-In Theater went down. Two trailers were demolished when fir trees fell in the Tall Firs Trailer Park at 15656 S.E. Division. An estimated 29,000 homes were without power. And hundreds of years of agriculture history were reduced to kindling as dozens of old barns blew over.
Root became watch fixer

Elden Root
1924-2000

Elden Root was one of Gresham's last watchmakers. Root and Russell Mealey were fixtures for many years at Mealey's Jewelers on Powell Boulevard in downtown Gresham.

Each man sat at a tiny watchmaker's desk using minuscule tools to put fine watches back in working order.

By the time Root got into the watchmaking business, no one made watches from scratch anymore.

Though he could build a watch, most of his life was spent tracing the cog wheels of jeweled movements to seek out problems.

When he retired in 1990, his craft was virtually obsolete, replaced by $10 plastic and disposable watches.

Illness would change his life. He contracted tuberculosis as a child, lost a lung at 14 and spent seven years in TB sanatoriums. Watchmaking, which required no strenuous activity, was one of the recommended professions for people with his handicap.

He enrolled in the Oregon School of Watch Making and took up his career, working for several jewelers in Portland before joining Mealey's, where he worked for 29 years. He then worked for Sjolund's Jewelry until his retirement. Sooner or later, most area residents crossed paths with Root in the store, and he always looked up from his work to visit with customers.

Stone sells the finer things

Gordon Stone sold dress-up clothes to Gresham residents for four decades.

Stone was the son of a lumber mill worker in the Columbia Gorge mill town of Palmer. His father died on the job when he was 10, and one of Stone's first encounters with fine dressing was a bargain-priced eighth-grade graduation suit bought from Ray Martin's Gresham clothing store. Martin was so impressed with the 15-year-old youth that he hired him.

After his service in World War II, Stone resumed his job with Ray Martin, a store that was launched in Gresham in 1909 by Ed Alysworth. Ultimately Stone and Ralph Quicksall became partners, and in 1957, Stone became sole owner of Gordon Stone Clothing, at one time called Gordon Stone's Key to Fashion.

"Dad said he wanted a job where he wouldn't get dirty," Martin Stone said of his father's signature look, a crisp shirt and tie.

Changes: Loss of fair sad

Continued from page 61

Portland exposition center.

The decade was marked by major weather catastrophes. First came the 1962 Columbus Day Storm, kicked off by a tropical storm that swept inland. It took 48 lives in Oregon and claimed airplane hangers and the new Gresham bowling alley, Eastmont Lanes.

Sustained winds at Troutdale airport were 66 mph with gusts of 106. It amounted to a $1 million loss in Gresham and took down 43 barns, eradicating a precious part of the area's farming heritage.

That spring, an Alaska earthquake at Anchorage killed 114 and triggered a tidal wave that took lives on an Oregon beach.

The 1964 Christmas floods sent water raging down the Sandy River, claiming the life of one man and wiping out bridges and homes all along the Sandy.

Gresham's population experienced the largest increase in the state, from 7,500 to 9,600 people, and Gresham would open its third high school, Sam Barlow, in 1968.

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1960-1969: TUMULT AND TRANSFORMATION

Fair bids farewell after 62 years

A church is a funny place to smell onions. But cock your head just right and you can almost get a whiff of fried onions from Steve Splawn’s hamburger stand. It wasn’t the Multnomah County Fair without his onions.

East Hill Foursquare Church stands there now on Main Avenue. Out back, Eastman Parkway cuts across what used to be the Multnomah County Fairgrounds.

There are thousands of people living in Gresham now who never knew that the county fair happened in this town every year from 1907 to 1969.

You could tell you were getting close to the fair because the tidy white houses along Main would have signs out in the driveways offering parking for $1. Or you could drive in under the fair archway and park in the lot, walking down the rows of cars all powdered with dust.

Gresham’s first fair in 1907 was “on the flats near Johnson Creek” where Main City Park’s Little League ball field is now. Organizers took their cue from the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland and set up a fair complete with a midway.

The catchphrase of the fair was “meet you at the furrow,” the nickname of the Lewis and Clark Exposition midway. Harry Ott led the Gresham band, and B.W. Emery barbecued a whole beef and gave away free sandwich. When the sandwiches ran out, there was soup and crackers for 5 cents.

The kids always wanted to head to the carnival first. The siren song of the pitchmen who promised riches for dropping a single dime in a single dish was hard to pass up. But parents scolded and tugged resisting hands, saying, “Let’s see the exhibits first.”

That first fair was so successful that organizers took the $700 profit and joined forces with the county to set up the Multnomah County Fair. The first building erected at the Main Avenue site was for poultry.

A fair board was created; buildings were built. The fair became a business. Horseracing was introduced. Stage shows were added.

The figures were impressive. In 1960, 163,051 people attended during the 10-day run. For many, it was the only time they ever came to Gresham.

The last fair in 1969 was billed as the “Fairwell to Gresham.” The next, in 1970, would be at the Multnomah County Exposition Center.

“I was at the first fair and will be at the last,” Minnie Ayersworth told The Outlook.

As soon as the fair was gone, talk began on what would happen to the fairgrounds. In the meantime, a brand new Mt. Hood Community College parked its classroom trailers there in the late 1960s. East Hill Church bought 50 acres in 1974, building their auditorium in 1979. Gresham Town Fair shopping center was launched the following summer.

The fair is a good place to blow your berry-picking money. There are walking sundae, big cubes of vanilla ice cream dipped in chocolate and nuts. Or caramel apples that fuse your upper and lower teeth together. Or cotton candy that wafis away in the wind.

The rides threaten the stability of all you have eaten before, including the hamburger and onions. You can still smell the onions . . .

Riegelmann’s stands test of time

In a culture where people drive 30 miles to a national chain mega-store to buy a refrigerator for $20 less than the local appliance store’s price, Neil Riegelmann has something special.

Riegelmann’s Appliance turned 40 in 2004, and the Gresham appliance store on Powell Boulevard was as popular as ever.

Loyalty is important, and Riegelmann amassed plenty of it since one fine day in 1965 when he struck out on his own. Through his job — selling appliances for Harold Kelly, one of area’s most respected appliance stores back then — Riegelmann had picked up the nuances of the business world and, at age 40, wanted to work for himself.

“I thought East County would develop, and I wanted to be a part of it,” he says.

Riegelmann served in the Pacific theater flying B-24s for the U.S. Air Force in World War II, returned to Oregon and attended Oregon State University.

He married his first wife MaeVern and fathered two children. Then tragedy struck. Two weeks after giving birth to the couple’s second child, MaeVern was diagnosed with cancer. She lived for another 16 years, then died, leaving Neil and their two teenage children, Carol Marie and Jim, on their own. Now 80, Riegelmann remarried and counts 37 years with his second wife, Lynn.

When he launched his own business, money was tight. Riegelmann had a grand total of $1,500 to start his business, and lenders weren’t interested. One man believed in him, though. Glenn Rossetter, now of Sunriver, loaned Riegelmann $7,000.

This bought a lot of appliances. Enough to fill the 20-by-50-foot building in the heart of Gresham, at Second Street and Main Avenue.

Five years later, this space proved much too small. Riegelmann built a storefront at the corner of Second Street and Hood Avenue.

Another five years passed, and Riegelmann’s was, by then, East County’s largest appliance store. In 1975, the business expanded again, this time into its current location at 301 E. Powell Blvd.

While other appliance stores have succumbed to the pressures of the large department and big-box stores, Riegelmann’s has continued to grow. Three years ago Riegelmann opened a new store in Sandy.

After 40 years at this game, Riegelmann has seen other appliance and furniture shops come and go. The secret to his success?

“Well, I just try to have fun with all my customers and employees,” Riegelmann says. “Treating your employees right is important. They represent you. They deliver and sell the product and are out there, talking to the customers.”

1960-1969: TUMULT AND TRANSFORMATION

First citizen Sedley Stuart

“Community colleges were very new then. Only a few were going concerns when we first thought of an east Multnomah County college. Frank Roberts and I found only one man in Salem that day who knew anything about them. He gave us some pamphlets and books about other colleges in a cardboard box.”

— Sed Stuart on the founding of Mt. Hood Community College

When Sedley Stuart was named Gresham’s first citizen of the year in 1990, he explained that it was impossible to live in Oregon and not be a volunteer.

“Oregon really operates on volunteerism,” he said. Stuart and his wife, Betty, his near-equal in the volunteer department, learned the art of contributing when they moved to East County in 1950. He was a pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps when he was stricken with polio. After two years in a Navy hospital, he returned to college, got a diploma and moved with his young family to Oregon. He was in a wheelchair.

Gradually, Stuart got on his feet, physically with the use of braces and canes, professionally in the insurance industry, and communally by volunteering.

“The first time I saw people band together for a com-

mon cause was to rid ourselves of a garbage dump at Southeast 177th Avenue between Division and Market. We were successful and followed that with a drive for park sites,” he recalled in “Lest We Forget...”, a history of the early days of Mt. Hood Community College written by Irene Bradfield.

In 1957 Stuart joined the school board of Powellhurst Elementary and from there bounded upward, to the David Douglas district board, to the Multnomah County School Boards Association and to the presidency of the Oregon School Boards Association. Simultaneously he and partners built Stumm Stuart Bybee Insurance Management Inc.

Stuart served on the State Board of Education under two governors and was named by Gov. Tom McCall to the initial board of the Portland Mass Transit System that became TriMet.

He stood up for his convictions, carrying the argument for light-rail back to the then-hostile luncheon tables of East Multnomah County.

“Few could match his speaking ability and verve in moving agendas forward, or his unflagging stand for ‘go’ at critical junctures,” Bradfield wrote.

It was that go that sent him to Salem hunting up information on community colleges and made him a founding board member of Mt. Hood Community College.

As head of the Oregon School Boards Association, he orchestrated a change of law that permitted board members reimbursement for travel out of state, arguing that good volunteers pick up ideas from counterparts elsewhere in the country.

He said that first Mt. Hood Community College board was the best he ever worked with, because “If it was a good idea, then we were going to steal it.”
Homes of Significance

The Louise House

Owned by the Albertina Kerr Center, 2307 N.E. Flanders St.

**Background:** The Louise Home was built between 1925 and 1927. The building was originally designed as a hospital for pregnant girls and the “venereally diseased.”

Now owned by the Albertina Kerr Centers for Children, the Kathryn Carlson Residence Hall and the Jim Smith Grove of Fir Trees (some of them 165 years old) were nominated in 1987 to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Louise House was listed on Sept. 10, 1987.

The Jacob Zimmerman House

Owned by the city of Gresham in care of Fairview Rockwood Wilkes Historical Society, 17111 N.E. Sandy Blvd.

**Background:** The Zimmerman House was built in 1878 and is significant for its association with the settlement and farming of the Columbia River floodplain and its longtime historic pioneer family, the Zimmermans, who were early dairy farmers.

The land around the home is part of the city of Gresham park system and is being developed as the Zimmerman Farm Heritage Park.

The two-story Queen Anne style farmhouse remains a fine example of the architectural style common to farmhouses in the latter part of the 19th century.

The Jacob Zimmerman House was listed on June 5, 1986, and remains open today for tours on the third Saturday of each month, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Carnegie Library

Owned by the Gresham Historical Society, 410 N. Main Ave.

**Background:** The Gresham Library, established in 1903, was housed in various buildings until the opening of the Carnegie Library in March 1913 in downtown Gresham.

The building was one of 1,679 such libraries financed by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie between 1886 and 1925.

The library property was purchased for $1,900 and Carnegie grant money paid the $11,568 construction cost. The leaded glass windows picture a colophon, the symbol of a printer, which dates back to the medieval period.

The Carnegie Library was listed on Jan. 24, 2000, and is now the Gresham History Museum. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday and noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The William Gedamke House

Owned by Frederick and Donna Garner, 1304 E. Powell Blvd.

**Background:** William Gedamke, a German who immigrated to the United States with his parents in 1845, had this Queen Ann style house built from

**Staff Photos by Flint Carlton**

**Above:** The Louise House was originally designed as a hospital for pregnant girls.

**Right:** The Zimmerman House was owned by longtime historic pioneer family, the Zimmermans, who were early dairy farmers.

**Below:** The Carnegie Library was one of 1,679 libraries financed by steel magnate Andrew Carnegie between 1886 and 1925.
Homes: Hughes House influenced local architecture

Continued from page 66

Mail-order plans by George Barker in "Modern Cottage."

The style was "The Cottage Souvenir #2," published in 1891 by Newman & Company.

Gedamke married Lucinda Stipe and they settled in Gresham in 1891. Gedamke was a farmer and raised cattle in the area.

The William Gedamke House was listed on Nov. 13, 1989. The home is now a restaurant.

Dr. Herbert H. Hughes House

Owned by Tracy McCoy, 1229 W. Powell Blvd.

Background: Dr. H.H. Hughes, mayor of Gresham from 1941 to 1955, was the original owner of this Colonial-style home built in 1922.

Considered in documents "one of the first houses built in this (Powell) neighborhood," its presence influenced the design of later nearby houses on West Powell Boulevard and contributed to establishing the "residential character" of the neighborhood with its wood shingles, brick chimney, central arched entrance porch, massive Tuscan porch posts and fanlight eyebrow dormers.

The Hughes House was listed on Sept. 5, 2001. It is a private home.

Above: The Hughes House was owned by the mayor of Gresham from 1941 to 1955. It is still a private home.

Left: The William Gedamke House was built from mail-order plans from "Modern Cottage," and was owned by a farmer and cattle rancher. It is now a restaurant.

Congratulations ... and thanks

On Gresham's 100th birthday, Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center would like to thank the community for decades of support. It has been our honor to serve Gresham and the east metro area as it has developed and prospered over the years.

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Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center
1970-1979: Coming Of Age

Cloudtree was first window shop

Downtown Gresham was a market town until the late 1960s. It was where we came on Saturday to shop and go to the movies and have an ice cream cone at the Rexall Drug. J.C. Penney and W.R. Hicks sold underwear, union suits, overalls and school shoes. Sturdy, brown oxfords and crisp cotton shirts.

If you wanted something fancier — a suit for the man of the family to wear to Portland — you went to Aylesworth's, later Gordon Stone's.

But if you wanted shopping in the sense of sport — the kind of strolling and window gawking that people do today — there was no place in Gresham that offered much in the way of luxury goods.

"There was no place in Gresham to buy a wedding present," said Mary Jo Hessle. In the fall of 1972, she and her sister, Lucy, opened Cloudtree & Sun at 55 North Roberts next to the Gresham J.C. Penney store.

The tiny space was 1,500 square feet and contained $6,500 of inventory at cost covering 16 categories of merchandise. It offered fine cookware and dishes, cook books and gifts, candles and art objects and Christmas ornaments, every bit as trendy as any store in Lake Oswego.

Also in the 1970s, Don and Geri VanZyl opened their clothing store, The Glass Butterfly, in the old Hessel garage, providing yet another reason for shoppers to come to Gresham and for Gresham residents to stay at home to shop.

When the big interest in cooking surfaced in late 1977, Cloudtree & Sun moved to a large space at 112 N. Main next door to Miller Kidder Hardware. Their sales doubled that year, and they offered cooking classes with Joanne Stone as the director. The cooking school averaged 100 classes a year and drew people into the store to learn about methods and techniques.

Ultimately, Mary Jo Hessle bought out her sister's share of the store and became sole owner. In 1982 she and her husband, Don Hessle, formed a partnership linking Cloudtree with the former hardware store next door, opening Main Street Restaurant. It was the nucleus of a revitalized downtown Gresham scene that brought the Bergeron brothers to open a fine clothing store on Main Avenue. That store would later be The Toy Bear. At the other end of Main the restoration of the Zion United Church of Christ, first as a bookstore, later as a Billy Harn's Ashley's restaurant, and the development of the old Market Bakery site by Frank and Billy Harn's brought shoppers and strollers to travel the full length of Main Avenue in downtown Gresham.

After a long run at Main Street Grocery, Don Hessle retired and Mary Jo Hessle closed Cloudtree in 2001, ending more than 25 years in the downtown district and changing the face of downtown Gresham.

Russell gets school honor before death

Gordon Russell, 1917-2000

Gordon Russell, superintendent of the Gresham Grade School District from 1948 to 1977, came to work as the head of Gresham's grade school district when it had one school and 325 students. At his retirement, 28 years later, the district numbered seven schools and 4,400 students.

Gordon Russell Middle School was named for him many years before he died, though he often joked that he "thought you had to be dead to have a school named after you." On his 80th birthday, he visited his namesake school, telling of the day he conducted business with a Gresham bank teller who went home and told his daughter, a student at Gordon Russell, that she had met the real Gordon Russell.

"No, you didn't," the skeptical child responded. "He's dead."

Though he only had his name on one school, Russell's imprint on the district was marked in the construction of East Gresham, Dexter McCarty, North, Highland, Powell Valley and finally, Gordon Russell. During his career, the district launched a year-around school program to solve issues of overcrowding.

"I had a good school board every time (a new school was built)," Russell reflected in 1997.

"And that was because they were more interested in the boys and girls than they were in me."
1970-1979: COMING OF AGE

Schedeen molded city over kitchen table

Betty Schedeen was known as the woman who changed Gresham over her kitchen table.

As the 86-year-old lay dying July 28, 2004, friends made sure that Schedeen — who would grab a coat, put on her lipstick and race out to change the world — had her lipstick on.

Lipstick was important. She put it on the last thing before she got out of the car, said her longtime friend Jack Malcom. She put it on along with a cheerful face when she went to see her dying husband, said her daughter. "And she told us to put ours on," remembered Sarabeth Schedeen. "Look pretty for your father," she said.

Betty Moore Schedeen came to Gresham as a child, growing up and developing the steel determination that founded a college and built a hospital. She seemed born with the bravado to hobnob with politicians including John Fitzgerald Kennedy and the courage to walk into a room full of men and engage in free and equal discussion — whether they liked it or not.

"She lived a life a lot of people envy, because she had enough guts to do what she wanted to do," said Shirley Morgan, who grew up in the same Gresham neighborhood with the noisy, rambunctious Betty Moore and her brother, Jimmy. "It was the family to know. Betty's mother was just as wild as Betty, a wonderful woman. You always knew Betty was going to do something great."

Schedeen went to college, and after a brief first marriage, wed Poly Schedeen, who served for a time in the state senate. She ran an employment service for two decades. She worried about job seekers without enough education to make a living and thought a two-year college might be an answer. Though she had money, independence and a husband who supported and applauded her efforts, she feared for women who did not have those things and were struggling.

"I've always been full of vision," Schedeen said in a 1998 Outlook interview. "There's vision sticking out of every direction." She added that she was born with energy and had she devoted it all to her four children, they would have developed "nervous tics."

Former Gresham Mayor Gussie McRobert said her mentor's vision was almost always ahead of the rest of the community, and that sometimes it took time "for the rest of us to catch up."

Schedeen had an unusual form of dementia in late life called Lewy Body disease that caused her to go "in and out," friends said. The disease sometimes causes patients to see small people.

"Trust Betty, though," McRobert said. "She saw courtiers from the court of King Louis XIV."

Schedeen attributed much of her attitude to her mother, who decided that her children needed to live in the country. When her husband refused, she used her own money to come to Gresham and purchase a house. "My dad lived in the Multnomah Hotel for three months before he gave in and came out here," Schedeen said in an Outlook interview.

Described as the "mother of Mt. Hood Community College," she and Outlook publisher Lee Irwin were there to launch the college. The late Sed Stuart, who shared honors with Schedeen and Irwin as Patron Saints of the college, once remarked, "They're always trying to invent a perpetual motion machine, but that's not necessary because the good Lord put one on earth for us to observe — that's Betty Schedeen."

"She had to fight to keep the college from going to Portland," remembers Bonnie Irwin, wife of Lee Irwin and a member of the original committee.

Dr. Bob Silverman, president of MHCC at the time of Schedeen's death in 2004, observed that getting a community college built in Gresham "was a pretty amazing feat, especially when one considered the rural nature of Gresham and the surrounding area at that time."

Schedeen often extended her reach to Portland, seeing it that a gallery in the Portland Building was sponsored by Gresham women. After receiving the White Rose Oregon Women of Achievement Award, she made sure that three other local women were honored. Hers is the name on the first room at the Legacy Mount Hood birthing center. She was cited as one of the community's most influential people in an Outlook publication in 2000.

When John Kennedy came to town campaigning in 1960, she was the person to drive him around and introduce him to Gresham. "You'll never bring culture to Gresham," her husband said when she went to Portland to the arts commission. But the exposure launched her two daughters in the entertainment business in California, Sarabeth Schedeen, to run a talent agency, Anne Schedeen to be an actress. Son Tony runs the family farm, and Brinkley is a developer. Poly Schedeen died in 1986.

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1970-1979: COMING OF AGE

Plane crash leaves 10 dead on Burnside

They remember it as the night of the pink snow.

At dinnertime on Dec. 28, 1978, a United Airlines DC-8, Flight 173, with 189 passengers and crew aboard, crashed at Northeast 157th and Burnside.

On Gresham Butte, a woman watched from her window, telling her husband, “It looks like that plane is going down.”

“They never do,” he said, not bothering to look up.

Later it was learned that the plane ran out of fuel while circling and dealing with suspect landing gear. Capt. Malburn “Buddy” McBroom, who survived, said he tried to aim the plane at a dark spot.

The big plane, with a wingspread of 180 feet, crossed over Stark Street at an estimated 70 feet. It smashed a vacant house on the south side of Burnside Street and skidded across Burnside, shattering an empty house on the north side. The plane broke open and stopped, its slide arrested by fir trees and power lines. The huge tail loomed eerily through the tangle of broken trees.

A woman in a neighboring house was feeding her baby when the plane pounded into the ground. She snatched the child from a high chair and peered out to see people.

“We’re from the plane,” they said. She let them in, spreading towels on the floor for the injured.

The rescuers focused on the immediate — 10 dead (eight passengers and two crew members), 23 seriously injured, 50 minor injuries and 106 healthy but stunned passengers.

At the back of their minds, the rescuers harbored a parenthetical question, “Why pink snow?” Later they realized it was pink insulation material from the plane and the destroyed houses. It formed a cloud over the crash and fell gently from 6:14 p.m. when the plane hit, until about 10 that night.

Aimee Conner, survivor

Conner, of Portland, was 17 when she got safely out of the plane. In 1998, then a new mom with a 6-month-old son, she organized a reunion of survivors and rescuers. “How many plane crash survivors are there?” she asks.

“We don’t know each other at all,” she says of the people who will meet Monday. “But we have a unique bond.”

Surviving such an event, she observes, is not exactly like talking to people who won the lottery. With lottery winners, she notes, “you hear that money hasn’t done much good for them. We have found some good in the experience.”

Bill Ristau, retired, Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office

Ristau and a partner were at an apartment complex on Northeast 162nd Avenue when the plane went down.

“Gee, Bob,” Ristau said to his partner, “look at that plane. It’s really low.”

“Then we heard something that sounded like shots,” he remembered. “I learned later it was the plane snapping off Douglas fir trees on the way down. The sky lit up, and it still didn’t dawn on me.”

Ten minutes after the crash, Ristau was there. “It was total darkness… People were walking around and didn’t appear hurt. I saw a man in a white shirt. ‘What happened?’ he said. I told him a plane had crashed, and he said, ‘I’m the captain.’”

Ristau observed that electrical lines were down everywhere, “but no one was electrocuted.”

He helped people down from the plane. The luggage, he remembers, was a reminder of Christmas, spilled gifts, new things in boxes, with tags and wrapping paper.

Wray Jacobs, retired, Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office

“I went in there shortly after the others did. We all just pitched in carrying people,” remembers Jacobs, now retired in Gresham. “Some of those neighbors responded well. It is amazing how people respond.”

One scene, he says, “I will remember it as long as I live. Another deputy, Larry Aab, was carrying the body of a little girl out of that wreck. He was crying. The little girl looked like his daughter, same age, the same coloring.”

Connie Johnson, retired, criminalist, Gresham Police Department

The Gresham Police Department sent Johnson to take pictures.

“God, it was cold,” he remembered.

The DC-8 broke open between the cockpit and the first-class section. The cockpit, he remembered, was rolled back under the body of the plane, crumpled to a ball no bigger than a dining room table for six.

When Johnson arrived, rescuers were still bringing bodies from the plane. The open end of the fuselage, spilling seats and commonplace items, was so high off the ground that men stood on the ground with the arms extended high over their heads to receive the injured and dead.

Nearby was a dead flight attendant. “She had been knocked clear out of her boots,” he remembers.

Johnson won a national award for law enforcement
1970-1979: COMING OF AGE

Crash: United was hit hard

Continued from page 70

photos taken that night. He returned the next day and took more.

"There was a lot of jealousy between Fire District 1 and the Multnomah County Sheriff's office," he says. "I remember (Chief) Dick Ham arguing with the sheriff's deputy about who was in charge. The next day, even though all the victims were gone, they had the big triage tent up."

Gresham police covered the largest territory in their history after the crash. With all personnel from the sheriff's office at the crash, Gresham patrolled Multnomah County to 122nd Avenue.

Leonard Blodgett, a United Airlines employee for 40 years

Six of the 10 who died were United employees or in the United family. Blodgett says. In addition to the deceased flight attendant and the flight engineer, four United family members traveling on a "space available" basis were killed.

Elizabeth Ardor, 4, lost her parents and two sisters in the crash.

Aris Painter, then nursing administrator at Gresham Hospital

"An incredible number of people came out of the woodwork to help," remembers Painter, who first heard of the crash from a secretary with a police scanner.

Only two or three injured came to Gresham hospital, then in the old building in downtown Gresham. The pilot was among them.

"He was more emotionally bashed up than anything," she remembers.

Lynn Egli, Corvallis, survivor

Egli was in Row 18, right side, middle seat, on his way to Portland from Kansas to visit his girlfriend, Roberta, now his wife.

Egli said passengers were instructed "very well" to prepare for an emergency landing.

"Somebody from the back yelled, 'Get your head down'... I have a fair amount of memory loss from that point until I ended up in the back yard of somebody's house."

At the airport, Egli's girlfriend, Roberta, was told that "the flight had landed short of the runway."

Two hours after the crash, Egli arrived at the airport by bus. He called his parents in Iowa, thinking they would not know of the event, but they were watching it on TV. "Mom always writes down my flight number," he said. "It took me three hours to call. It never crossed my mind that they would know."

"It was a profound thing," he says. "I knew I was supposed to be alive. I really felt that God wanted me to be alive. He sure had plenty of opportunity. The wings were right outside of the window and broken off, yet the fuselage was all intact. I was able to survive that tremendous force just a few feet outside the window."

A few filed lawsuits after the crash, but Egli doesn't believe in that. "Since I didn't quite get to my destination, it seemed fair that they reimburse me for my ticket, and I had a hole in my suitcase. They gave me a check for $500 and made me sign a big multi-page document saying I would never sue them. Well, dadgummit, I flew back to Kansas four days later on United."

First published in December 1998.

Abduction frightens community

On April 24, 1978, long before schools worried about security, a stranger stepped into West Gresham and took 7-year-old Stacey Wilmith, telling her that her mother needed her at home.

The incident launched what was then described as Gresham's biggest manhunt.

The child was molested, savagely beaten and left for dead in the brush near Sundial Road in Troutdale, where she was found by a motorist early the next morn-
1970-1979: COMING OF AGE

Historic mile marker rediscovered

In 1977 two Gresham residents, Rob and Bud Bunting, found the missing 13-mile marker in a pile of construction debris. The mile markers were installed about 150 years ago along Stark Street (then called Baseline Road) to mark the miles from the Wilson River to the Sandy River. They gave rise to location names on Stark Street, the 11-Mile Tavern, for one thing. But the most famous of all was the marker that designated Mile 12 and created 12-Mile Corner at the intersection of Stark Street and Northeast 223rd Avenue. The carved stone obelisks, labeled P and followed by a one- or two-digit number, weighed somewhere in neighborhood of 400 to 500 pounds, and though they poke out of the ground only about 3 feet, they have another 3 feet or so below the surface. They are solid. But over the years, the sturdy markers have suffered damage and loss, and only a few remain. Twelve-Mile, the most famous of all, is gone.

Unofficial custodian of the mile markers is Howard Horner of the David Douglas Historical Society. Considering their size and weight, Horner says, it's amazing how easily the markers come up missing. The Gresham Historical Society was the new kid on the block in 1977 when the Bunctings discovered P-13 in a pile of debris scraped up from the widening of Stark Street. They got in touch with Jim Chase, president of the historical society, who procured Bob McEwen's wrecker and moved the stone to his Gresham surveying office. Ultimately Chase and others boosted the rock into a Datsun pickup and for nine years kept it in a storage room.

Chase's successor, Karl Hayes, decided that the stone should be restored to the roadside, and working with what was then McIntire's Athletic Club at the corner of Southeast Stark and Cleveland, he made plans to reinstall the stone.

Mile Marker 13 was rededicated at Mile 13 on May 13 at 1300 hours.

In 2000, the 11-mile marker was out of police custody and back in the ground. It had been missing since 1997 when an unknown individual pulled it from the ground in front of a convenience store at 19720 S.E. Stark St. Almost two years later, Gresham police found it in a boat belonging to a fellow who claimed he found it in the back lot of a tavern and took it to use as a future grave marker.

Patients remember dedication of city's first female physician

Dr. Corrine Trullinger Chamberlin
1905-1981

"Her nurses loved her. Her patients wept when she retired. She did not walk the balls of fame. She walked the gravel roads and pathways to the homes of the sick in this community, treating the physical, the spiritual, and the mental disorders. She was that kind of doctor."

— Willard Mathiesen at Corrine Chamberlin's memorial service

Leadership seems born to the cottage-style medical office at 108 N.E. Second Ave.

Now the dentist's office of Dr. Mike McKeel, whose credits range from Citizen of the Year to chairman of the school board, the little office was built in 1941 for Dr. Corrine Trullinger. Physician to the community for 40 years, Trullinger brought 5,000 children into this world, including Mike McKeel and Mike and Diane McKeel's first son. McKeel's mother, Mary, worked for Dr. Trullinger, whose staff secretly called her "Truly."

Trullinger, whose grandmother was a doctor in Oregon in 1848, struggled through medical school during the Depression, playing second fiddle to male medical students and sleeping on a mattress on an attic floor in order to finance her education.

Her internship was in psychiatry, but through an accident in timing, her residency in New York was in general family practice. In 1937, learning that another doctor was leaving Gresham, she came here and assumed his practice, the third medical doctor in town at the time, and the only female.

In 1946 she married Methodist minister Mark Chamberlin. Though she never had children of her own, she became stepmother to his children.

Those were the days before Gresham had an emergency ward. Trullinger's patients remembered as many as 25 patients waiting in her office while she tended to an emergency. When Trullinger retired in 1975, there were no other doctors practicing obstetrics in the area. The Gresham hospital maternity department closed.

"I know of patients needing to go to the hospital who were taken there by her. She would do anything for her patients, even step to see them daily at home when necessary ... You could never do anything for her, but she would repay you a hundredfold," remembered Lela Grundfossen in a 1987 Outlook article.

Hessels continued business tradition

William "Bill" Hessel Jr.

Bill Hessel, third generation of one of Gresham's oldest business families, served a dozen years in the 1960s and 1970s on the Gresham City Council, where he was in charge of the sewage treatment facility.

The first Hessel, John Charles, came to Gresham in 1908 to sell horse-drawn farm equipment. His son, William A., joined the Gresham business in 1911.

William Albert Hessel Jr. was born in 1925. "My father had a Maxwell franchise, but the Chrysler Corporation bought out Maxwell and in 1925 and in 1928, Plymouth joined the ranks of popular make."

In 1979, when Hessel retired and sold the franchise, it was the only original Chrysler franchise west of the Mississippi River.

Hessel graduated from Gresham High in 1943 and served in the South Pacific with the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946. He survived the sinking of his ship and floated in the Pacific in a life jacket for several days.

Hessel married Joan Deville in 1947. After 47 years of marriage, she died after a four-day illness in 1991. He maintained his friendships with other Gresham residents, including Kay Mealey. Mealey and her late husband were part of the Hessels' wedding party. In 1995, after a whirlwind romance, Kay Mealey and Bill Hessel were married at his cabin on Mount Hood. Bill Hessel died in 1999.

— 1976 — Fred Meyer came to Gresham in March to open the city's first Fred Meyer store.


— 1976 — Hank Aaron retired from baseball, and Smokey Bear died in the national zoo.

— 1977 — Trail Blazer hysteria struck when Bill Walton led the team to the National Basketball Association championship.

— 1977 — Gresham chooses Ebetsu, Japan, as Sister City.

— 1978 — East Hill church built an auditorium on the old Gresham fairgrounds, and the Town Fair shopping center was launched on the other side.

— 1978 — On Dec. 28, United Flight 173, a DC-8 with 189 passengers and crew aboard, crashed in a patch of fir trees at Northeast 157th Avenue and Burnside Street.

— 1978 — Californians approve Proposition 13, slashing property taxes.

— 1979 — A January 1979 ice storm was a record-breaker, freezing over the Sandy River for the first time in 25 years.

— 1979 — Partial meltdown of a nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania released radioactive material.

— 1979 — Some 90 people, including 63 Americans, taken in Iran hostage crisis.
Rambunctious decade had its controversies

Gresham had its share of ups and downs in the 1980s, a decade marked with false starts.

The bloom was off the boom of the 1970s, and Gresham flirted with and lost a regional mall when Winnmar pulled out of the site that is now Gresham Station. All sorts of high-tech plants were being wooed by East County officials, but it was Gresham's first woman mayor, Margaret Weil, who went to Japan and courted and won Fujitsu, which came to the area in 1987.

The decade was rambunctious and filled with recalls. A bitter Gresham Grade School strike lasted 15 days in 1981 before teachers went back to work. The uproar ended in an unsuccessful attempt to recall four board members. In an act that seemed like a TV comedy, Gresham Mayor Al Myers wore a "wire" with microphone concealed under his tie on an investigative visit to the Gresham wastewater treatment plant. Taxpayers ended up paying his legal fees. Politicians provided still more fodder when Pat Gillis was recalled for campaign misstatements; John Minnis was named to his seat in the state Legislature in 1985.

The next year, Multnomah County Commissioner Gordon Shadburne resigned in a flurry of charges ranging from sex scandals to campaign finance irregularities. The decision to build sewers in mid-Multnomah County was hard to take for homeowners who had moved to the area and lived off septic tanks since the 1960s. They saw stiff bills for sewer installation just as they were paying off their mortgages. As Gresham encroached on one side and Portland on the other, mid-county residents took a stab at incorporating as a city. The attempt failed in 1983.

Annexation from bigger neighbors continued, and Gresham's population soared in 1987 with the addition of Rockwood and 13,000 new residents.

The first light-rail track was built from Gresham to Ruby Junction. Light rail opened for good in 1986. Work began on a new hospital now called Legacy Mount Hood on Stark Street.

Gresham residents were shocked by the disappearance in 1987 of Mindi Thomas. In 1988, the skeletal remains of another missing Gresham girl, Jennifer Tchir, were found. The crimes went unsolved for more than a decade until they were linked to Todd Alan Reed, arrested in July 1999 for the killing of victims left in Portland's Forest Park. Another 1988 crime was never solved, the death of Anne Hanson, found stabbed on Roberts Avenue in Gresham.

At the tail end of the decade, tax foes Frank Eisenzimmer and Don McIntire scored a hit with Measure 5, forcing Oregon's first woman governor, Barbara Roberts, to spend her years in office tailoring state services to declining revenues. The final blow of the decade was the decision to add the spotted owl to the threatened list of the Endangered Species Act, a move that all but shut down the Northwest timber industry.
1980-1989: City reaches maturity

"It was great to be handed a blank sheet of paper and be told to design a hospital."

Aris Painter, Head of Nursing

New hospital rises out in the 'boondocks'

Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center, 20 years old in 2004, was built when you could buy a new PC with 256 kilobytes of memory for $1,995.

The hospital rose in a former carrot field way out in the boondocks on Stark Street, and for a couple years, the board worried that there weren't enough patients coming in the doors.

When it was built, Aris Painter, head of nursing at the hospital, went way out on a limb and insisted on private rooms "for the very private things" done to patients in a hospital.

And the hospital was built in the face of competition from another hospital, a veto by state agencies, and a lot of meetings that sent local leaders tramping to Salem to work it out with the governor.

A little boy with a broken leg was the first of 50 patients to move into the hospital November 1984. Local ambulance companies moved the patients for free from the old hospital in downtown Gresham (now a nursing home) to the new facility. Hospital officials created a 3-inch-thick book on how to move. The first glitch was the realization that there was no 220-volt outlet in the operating room to plug in the X-ray machine.

"And never enough storage," said Painter. "When you start cutting back to save money, storage is always the first thing to go."

Painter served a 27-year hitch in nursing, retired as vice president of patient care services, and then served another five years as volunteer coordinator. She is the hospital's memory, so revered by her nursing staff that her image is etched in the glass of the entry window at the hospital. Painter and Chaplain Harold Fuller came with the building. In fact, Painter had a part in building the place, and, she winked, "knows where the bones are buried."

"It was great," she reflected just before the hospital's 20th anniversary, "to be handed a blank sheet of paper and be told to design a hospital."

Planners built a mock-up room out of cardboard, she remembered, and ran codes to make sure everything worked. The angular rooms, bathrooms at the back so nurses see the patient first, worked except for phone hookups, she said. When hospital bed rails with phone connections were developed, the problem was solved.

Tom Parker, administrator of the hospital, said in 2004 that Painter's insistence on private rooms showed "quite a bit of foresight on her part. Any hospital now that doesn't have private rooms is working for that."

Parker said the hospital has two very distinct personalities. "It's a family feel," he says. "We know each other. We pass each other in the hall frequently and call each other by name. It's a warm place to be."

The 2004 technology brought a new cardiac cath lab that allowed staff to see into the arteries of patients, a new MRI CT scanner with all digital imaging that can be seen on screens throughout the hospital and a family birth center doubled in size.

There was no birthing facility when the hospital was built. That came in 1995, one of many milestones in the last two decades. Mount Hood's first permanent CAT scan was installed and a medical office building was built in 1985; a mammography center opened in 1987; radiation oncology opened in 1997; a second medical office building was built in 1998; the emergency department expanded in 1998; a third medical office building opened in 2000; the cardiac cath lab and CT scanner went into operation in 2002; and in 2004 the family birth center was expanded.

The hospital's volunteer guild is older than the building at 30 years. And the hospital has operated its mountain clinic at Mt. Hood Meadows ski area every sea-
1980-1989: City Reaches Maturity

Hospital: It's a 'different world'

Continued from page 74

son since 1984.

In 2004, Legacy Mount Hood Hospital had 78 beds, 300 medical staff, 569 employees including 241 nurses, and 183 volunteers. More than 33,000 patients are seen in the emergency department, and about 3,600 surgeries are performed annually.

It's a different world from the old Gresham General, Aris Painter said. It used to be that patients were in the hospital nearly a week for gall bladder surgery; now they go home the next day.

Painter envisioned a day that cardiac surgery patients will be in the hospital only a day.

"We are better off in our own homes," she said, "but a hospital is a wonderful place when you need it."

A September 1983 photo shows Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center under construction.

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1980-1989: City Reaches Maturity

Fannings gave their fortune away

During the first years when peacetime production was still gearing up, Fanning counted himself lucky that he had cars to sell.

Fanning served 16 years on the Gresham City Council and another 16 on the Multnomah County Tax Supervising Commission. Among his contributions to the city: the beginnings of a park system and a new sewer plant on the Columbia River. He volunteered with the Small Business Administration helping other business people, served in every level of Boy Scouts of America, including the regional council, and contributed so largely to the Kiwanis camp for handicapped children that the lodge is named for him.

In 1985 when he was 74 (Bertha declined to give her age), the pair announced, “You can’t take it with you,” and gave away most of their fortune, $1.92 million, to Gresham city parks, as well as substantial donations to Lewis & Clark College, Gresham United Methodist Church, the American Bible Society, the Mount Hood Kiwanis Camp for Handicapped Children, the Shriners Hospital in Portland and the Northwood Institute of Midland, Mich., a school for automobile dealers.

Fanning, a veteran of city politics, put strings on the gift to city parks, entrusting three friends to supervise the money. He didn’t want to fix potholes or to build an ugly fountain, he grumbled. Much of the Fanning gift went to the first phase of development of Red Sunset Park.

Stars, homegrown in Gresham

A 1985 Outlook story listed Gresham High graduates who had gone on to earn stars on their dressing room doors.

Anne Schedeen, who was All’s mom in the popular sit-com, got her start in Gresham Grade School portraying a librarian explaining how to care for books.

The daughter of Poly and Betty Schedeen, she started out in New York working mostly in commercials and moved to Los Angeles where she and her husband, Chris Barrett, got to do such celebrity events as the wedding of Barbra Streisand and James Brolin. Her sister Sara Beth is a talent agent.

William Witter was a hyperactive kid who was doing magic when he was growing up in the home of Clinton and Gloria Witter.

A 1969 Gresham High graduate, he made his way to Broadway by way of the circus. He tried out for Ringling Brothers Clown College, got a unicycle and taught himself to ride. He went on to understudy the ringmaster and then got a role as ringmaster in the Broadway musical “Barnum.” He played the role in London and in South Africa.

Scott Beldin and Don Thompson were a high-riding unicycle act in Las Vegas in 1985. They got their start at Wilkes Elementary School, hitting the big-time at the Wilkes PTA. Beldin graduated from Gresham High in 1957, Thompson in 1956. They shared the stage with stars such as Debbie Reynolds, Milton Berle and the Beatles. They were the “act-in-between” at the fancy show full of girls and great production numbers.

Meg Van Zyl first trod the boards as a third-grader at West Gresham School in “The Sound of Music.”

A 1976 Gresham High grad, she moved to New York, where she was an actress in the soap “All My Children” in 1985.

Historical Sideline:
Entrepreneur of the Year

1984 — Gresham resident Nick Alexander was named entrepreneur of the year by the Portland chapter of the National Management Association. Alexander, then 57, was president of Alexander Manufacturing, a 12-year-old firm with 120 employees.
1980-1989: CITY REACHES MATURITY

**Softspoken steamroller starts Teddy Bear Parade**

Soft-spoken, energetic Pat Fiedler has been a quiet steamroller ploughing through downtown Gresham for more than 20 years. In her wake, such community traditions as the Teddy Bear Parade and Children's Week took root and blossomed.

Co-owner of the Toy Bear Ltd, with husband Dale, Fiedler continually searched for ways to make the downtown core attractive and inviting to the community. She came to Gresham in the early 1980s, joining Main Street Grocery and Cloudtree and Sun on a block that was once better known for its hardware store.

"This is the focal point, the gathering place," Fiedler said. "This is a place for families to get together and have fun." Nothing compares, she said in 2002 when she was named Gresham's Citizen of the Year, to her satisfaction with events she refers to as "happenings."

One of Fiedler's happenings will be a key event of Gresham's centennial kickoff, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 12, when she and her helpers convert the old Gresham J.C. Penney store into a time machine to help Gresham residents experience 100 years of history. Called "Gresham Remembers," it will feature interactive exhibits, crafts, music, dancing and merriment that Fiedler has orchestrated. Her sense of fun and whimsy pervades Gresham's September Teddy Bear Parade.

"One of the things I'm most proud of is that Children's Week and the Teddy Bear Parade are strong enough to always be there," she said. "The Teddy Bear Parade is so down-home. That's part of its charm. It's the spirit of Gresham. But it's never just one person. It's everybody having a vision and working together as a team."

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**Historical Sidenote: The Voice of Bill Elliott**

Bill Elliott never made a hit record, but most people in East Multnomah County knew his voice.

The Gresham youth sang for his first funeral at the age of 12, and was still singing at the age of 80 in 1988. He and his wife, Beth, calculated that he had sung at as many as 30,000 funerals and 5,000 weddings, giving rise to the chant that "a funeral is not over unless Bill Elliott sings." Elliott, who liked to say that he was "once asked to sing 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' at a cremation," was born in 1907 in the Swedish community of Powell Valley east of Gresham. He died in 1991, and true to his word, sang at his own funeral with a tape he had recorded in advance.

Kathy Everett, executive director for the Gresham Downtown Development Association, calls Fiedler a "model business owner," crediting her with an ability to establish relationships between downtown businesses, property owners and the city.

She rallied downtown merchants and schools to celebrate Mother's Day by coordinating the "My Mom's A Winner" coloring contest. The youthful artwork, like colorful wallpaper, covers storefront windows every spring.

Anne Endicott profiled Pat Fiedler in The Outlook on May 18, 2002.
A Century of Leaders

In 1904, before incorporation papers came for the new Town of Gresham, the city elected its first mayor and city councilors, the Common Council.

The town of Gresham became official on Feb. 11, 1905, and in 1921 the name was officially changed to the city of Gresham.

Lewis Shattuck, 1904

Shattuck was the first mayor of the city and also the fourth, serving again in 1910. The son of John Wesley Shattuck, a pioneer of Gresham, Shattuck at the time of his election owned “the largest store building in Eastern Multnomah County and Clackamas County” at Second Street and Main Avenue.

During his term, Gresham city government limited saloons by charging a hefty license fee, named the existing streets, banned bicycles and horse-drawn carriages from the sidewalks and established a telephone system.

Dr. Joseph Malcolm Short, 1907

Short, the town’s first physician and second mayor, brought electricity to Gresham in 1908 and approved the land that would become the Gresham fairgrounds. He started a record of births in the town and helped organize a newspaper that was the forerunner of The Outlook. His daughter, Dorothea, would be Gresham's historian and librarian for most of her life.

E.B. Stuart, 1909

Little is known about Stuart, who served very briefly and approved an ordinance that provided that male prisoners of the city jail could work on town projects. Female prisoners were excepted from public labor crews.

George W. Kenney, 1918

Kenney served as mayor for two months following Lewis Shattuck’s second term, then was elected to the position in 1918. Born in Iowa, he came to Gresham in 1874 at the age of 21, settling on 160 acres on Baseline Road (Stark Street), where he owned the Terry store, predecessor to the 12-Mile Store. He was a member of the first Town Council and was also road supervisor for the district.

George W. Stapleton, 1915

Stapleton served as mayor until the Oregon governor appointed him to be Circuit Court judge. A lawyer, Stapleton attended Pacific University and was admitted to the bar in 1886. He was mayor of Vancouver, Wash., before moving to Portland, where he practiced law and looked after the Simon Benson-John Yeon timber interests. Besides being mayor in Gresham, he was chairman of the Gresham Union High School board, and the high school’s football field was named for him. He owned a costly house on Roberts Avenue, claimed in 1913 to be Gresham’s most expensive home at a price of $25,000.

A.W. Metzger, 1917

Metzger was appointed mayor to follow Stapleton. He owned a store at the corner of South Roberts Street and Powell Boulevard where Main City Park is. He was a volunteer firefighter, once served as fire chief and was on Gresham’s baseball team.

K.A. Miller, 1921

Miller was a cashier at the Bank of Gresham where his father was president. He was city recorder during World War II and on the council for a decade. He was also clerk of the Gresham Union High School board.

Charles Cleveland, 1926

The eighth person to be mayor of Gresham, Cleveland was an influential Gresham resident, son of Johnson Cleveland, who helped build the First Baptist Church in 1879.

Charles Cleveland was active in the church and local Masonic Lodge, and he helped found Gresham’s Commercial Club in 1911. His home still stands on a large block of property just south Gresham High School, and he donated the land where the high school is located. His wife threw fabulous parties, and Cleveland was known for improving streets in the city.

James Elkginton, 1933

Elkington platted the Wallula Heights subdivision and was manager of the Gresham Finance Company and active in banking, real estate and insurance. A longtime Gresham Grade School District board member, he worked hard to keep the city out of debt in the Depression. His daughter, Jean, would give part of her estate to the city to launch a performing arts center.

Russell Akin, 1935

Akin, the 10th mayor of Gresham, was descended from Oregon pioneers who crossed the plains in 1852. A salesman for Westinghouse Electric Company, Akin oversaw construction of a Gresham sewer treatment plant on Johnson Creek in 1937, then managed the wartime housing project, Fairview Homes, near Wood Village.

Dr. Herbert H. Hughes, 1941

A Gresham family doctor who served the community for 32 years as its physician, he also spent 16 years as mayor, longer than any mayor in the city’s history. Gresham’s 11th mayor lived at the corner of Powell Boulevard and Wallula Street with his mother and two sisters, where he raised prize roses and chrysanthemums.

His home is now on the National Register of Historic Places. During his time in office he revised the city charter, initiated planning and zoning, built a new city reservoir and city hall, and revamped the sewage system for $750,000, a record expenditure for Gresham at that time.

When he died in 1964, most of the town closed down for his funeral.

Gordon Swan, 1956

Swan, who served as mayor until 1959, came to Gresham in 1949 with his brother, Stan, to buy the Brockway-Nelson Dodge-Plymouth dealership. He was elected president of the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce in his freshman year on the chamber board, served four years on the City Council and when he was in his 30s was elected to fill the shoes of retiring mayor H.H. Hughes.

The city was then in the throes of building a sewer. "That sewer started Gresham growing," he remembered in a 1983 interview. He recalled that Gresham’s population then was about 3,000, adding, “We knew everybody
Leaders: Rexall Drug pharmacist was mayor in ’60s

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 78

in town in those days.” Swan died in 2002.

J. Henry Rodgers, 1959

A Realtor, Rodgers became mayor when Gordon Swan
resigned before his term was up. He was manager of the
Gresham branch of First National Bank, former owner of
Rodgers Market, president of the Gresham Chamber in
1941 and a veteran of 10 years on the City Council.
Rodgers’ term would be the shortest in city history. He took up his posi-
tion as mayor in May, and had a heart attack and died in June.

Robert L. McWilliams, 1959

Appointed to replace Rodgers was
City Councilor Robert McWilliams,
who was then elected in his own
right. McWilliams launched a city
manager form of government for
the growing city and served in that
position for 14 years. As city man-
ger, McWilliams presided over Gresham’s growth spurt in
the 1960s and 1970s as it moved from being a market
town to a suburban community. That responsibility car-
ried with it all the land-use planning and utility issues of a
booming community. McWilliams
moved on to be city manager of
both Lincoln City and Redmond and
retired to the Redmond area.

Stafford Dowsett, 1963

Staff Dowsett, as he was known,
came to the mayor’s office with a
name as old as Gresham. A pharma-
cist, he presided over the drugstore
counter at Gresham Rexall Drug,
established in 1904 by his father,
Arthur Dowsett. The drug store (now Jazzy Bagels) at
the corner of Main and Powell was always the community’s
forum, and most city leaders cut their teeth there growing
on city politics. Dowsett saw a
downtown parking lot improvement
district established during his term.
He died in 1987.

Dr. G. Alan Fisher 1969

Gresham’s third doctor-mayor,
Fisher served six years on the City
Council before becoming mayor.
Gresham was growing under the
guidance of a new comprehensive
plan, money was coming in to widen
Powell Boulevard, and the city was trying to stem the flood-
ing of Johnson Creek. Fisher came to Gresham after serv-
ing in the Medical Corps in World War II. He opened
Robert Street Clinic in 1967 and was chief of staff of the
new Mount Hood Medical Center. He retired in 1990.

Al Myers, 1973 and 1979

Myers, a resident of Gresham since 1939, was a real
estate broker and came to the mayor’s office believing
that the mayor and councilors should take more active roles
in day-to-day business. These views clashed with longtime City Manager
Bob McWilliams, and Myers ultim-
ately prevailed. Myers presided
over the vote and adoption of a new
city charter. Gresham grew from
10,000 to 34,000 people during the
years he was mayor. In 1974,
Gresham was the fastest-growing city
in East Multnomah County; and the
new Johnson Creek interceptor
sewage line opened thousands of
acres in the city’s southwest hills for
building. It was during his terms
that four new parks, Main City Park, Aspen, Bella Vista
and Thom, were opened.

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1980-1989: City Reaches Maturity

Heidi’s continues tradition despite moves

The water wheel at Heidi’s of Gresham keeps turning round and round, causing little children to stop and point and adults to draw a connection to the restaurant that has been a community spot for the past 35 years.

Don Eklund remembers the first water wheel. It was built out of wood castoffs from his farm’s shed materials and required only a small pump. He pieced it together with some old nails, and it gurgled itself out, eventually.

That’s how the story of Heidi’s began, when Don’s berry farming days ran out. He and his wife, Marie, had been in the business for 20 years. But farming’s tough.

They opened Heidi’s Coffee Shop in 1968.

The original homestyle restaurant on Highway 212 east of Gresham seated 54 diners and had a Swiss theme for practical and sentimental reasons. Practical because of the scenery with magnificent Mount Hood in the background. Second, Marie’s family background is Swiss.

“Don had someone come in and give him fry cooking lessons,” Marie recalls. “I was the hostess, pie-maker and bookkeeper.”

Three months into Heidi’s existence, disaster struck when an arsonist set fire to the restaurant and burned a third of it. “They never caught the guy,” Don says.

The Eklunds decided to rebuild and keep going. Two years later, Heidi’s seated 150 diners. Over the next three years, it expanded to a bakery, gift shop, deli and boutique and got a new name, Heidi’s Swiss Village Inc. The busboys then wore lederhosen and the women dirndls.

The couple’s teenage children worked at the restaurant. Actress Lindsay Wagner, “The Bionic Woman,” sometimes dropped by for a bite to eat. She had a home near Mount Hood.

The original baker, Jack Elmer, still has a shop on Hawthorne — Jafiva’s,” Don says.

As Don and Marie became more adept at their family-owned business, Don says they realized that their small empire was at the disadvantage of having seasonal traffic.

So, in 1980, the Eklunds moved to 1230 N.E. Cleveland Ave. and Burnside Road in Gresham. In November 1982, the Eklunds sold Heidi’s Swiss Village to Canteen of Oregon.

Since the move to Gresham, the Eklunds have expanded Heidi’s to put in a gift shop and banquet rooms. In 1985, they leased property next door to the Pony Soldier Motel chain. No longer a diner, the restaurant seats 300.

“There are four things I say are important in the restaurant business,” Don says. “Good food, good service, good atmosphere and being consistent.

“If you came in five, 10 years ago and really liked it and wanted to come back, it has to be just as you remembered.”

The couple is particularly proud, in 35 years of business, to say that many of their staff has been with them for more than 25 years. Their general manager and partner, Linda Hinshaw, was just 14 and a busser when she started at Heidi’s. The Eklunds are enjoying semi-retirement. Their son, Nick Eklund, is also a partner.

Jill Foreman wrote this story for The Outlook in 2004.

Leaders: Margaret Weil was city’s first female mayor

Continued from page 79

Elmer Summerville, 1977

In the period between Al Myers’ two mayoral terms, Summerville, Powell Valley Elementary School principal, was mayor. Summerville had been a councilor for eight years and in 1977 traveled to Eibetsu, Japan, to launch a Sister City relationship between Gresham and that Japanese city.

While he was mayor, the city won a $3.9 million grant to build a new city hall/school complex.

Margaret Weil, 1983

Weil was Gresham’s first woman mayor. She wanted to improve communications with City Hall through neighborhood associations. Reelected in 1986, she championed a downtown Gresham revitalization project and lost in April 1987.

Claiming a lack of support from the community, she suddenly resigned.

Larry Deyo, 1987

Deyo was chosen from the city council to replace Weil, and served as acting mayor until the next election. A design engineer at Freighthiner, he set about building a strong relationship with Gresham’s new annexed areas. He ran for the mayor’s seat in 1988 but lost to Gussie McRobert.

Norma Jean (Gussie) McRobert, 1989

McRobert, a nurse, was the wife of Chet McRobert, Gresham Ford dealer, and active in city politics with the Gresham Parks Commission. She launched Gresham’s Main City Park in the 1970s and in 1988, as a City Councilor, beat Larry Deyo to take the mayor’s seat that she held for the next 10 years. She believed that city councilors needed to be more involved and ultimately quit her own communications business to work as mayor. In her time in office the three-story annex to the city complex was added.

Charles Becker, 1999

Becker, a retired Portland State University football coach and health and physical education professor who served on the City Council in the 1970s, took over with strong support from Gussie McRobert. Becker, who had lived in Gresham 39 years, beat out four other opponents for the office. He had served on the Gresham parks commission with McRobert and was elected to the council in 1973, hoping to gain control over how the city was growing. Becker was reelected in 2002 and will be in office when Gresham marks its 100th birthday.
1980-1989: City Reaches Maturity

Issue of AIDS hits home at St. Henry

In February 1988, Pat and Val Herman, members of St. Henry Catholic Church, “came out” on the issue of AIDS, setting off an uproar at their church.

Still mourning the 1987 death of their 31-year-old gay son, Greg Herman, president of the Gresham High senior class in 1973, the pair marked the first anniversary of his dying by holding an AIDS seminar at St. Henry for other parents who were learning that their children had come home to die. Conservatives picketed and disrupted the event, leaving a questionnaire scrawled with the word “faggot.”

AIDS had seemed to be a big-city problem until families like the Hermans began to realize that their children were coming home with the simultaneous news that they were both homosexual and dying.

Some area residents moved quickly to make a difference in the epidemic. Dr. Estill Dietz, East County resident and a doctor of internal medicine, treated AIDS patients. Gresham resident Janet Bowman headed up an AIDS hotline to help families. Lou Schlitt, mother of a son who died of AIDS, opened her East Multnomah County home to friends and families of AIDS patients as part of the Cascade AIDS Project.

And the Rev. Vern Kirstein of Gresham’s First Baptist Church said it was “ignorance” to think of AIDS as a retribution for sin and set to work ministering to families stricken by the disease.

Farmer’s market launches

Outdoor vegetable, produce venue had 30 vendors in its inaugural season

The Gresham farmer’s market, launched in 1987, was the branchchild of Multnomah County Commissioner Polly Casterline, who died of pancreatic cancer and did not live to see how it flourished.

Casterline promoted the idea and positioned it at the end of the light-rail system in the parking lot of Gresham City Hall.

The market had 30 vendors in its inaugural season. From the tailgates of pickup trucks and beneath plastic dining canopies, customers bought strawberries, cucumbers and flowers directly from those who grew them.

Farmers were, at first, reluctant to participate, but within two years, vendors were clamoring for space.

The market, now located in downtown Gresham, bounced around for a dozen years between downtown side streets and the City Hall parking lot during various construction projects at both sites.

“It’s always been a social event,” said Debbie Lowry, who was there in the beginning.

In May 2001, the market established a permanent location on Northwest Third Street between Main and Miller avenues.
1990-1999: **Leaders And Legacies**

**1990** — Americans with Disabilities Act becomes law.

**1990** — Olwerri, Nigeria, named Gresham's third Sister City.

**1991** — U.S. and allies invade Iraq in Persian Gulf War.

**1991** — Gussie McRobert, mayor of Gresham, irked by a county plan to increase business income tax, suggested that Gresham should secede from Multnomah County and join Clackamas County.

**1992** — Gresham council bought land for its fourth city hall.

**1992** — Bill Clinton elected president.

**1992** — U.S. troops go to Somalia.

**1993** — Bomb strikes World Trade Center in New York.

**1993** — Federal agents stage a 51-day siege at Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas.

**1993** — Midwest floods kill 50 in nine states.

**1994** — Gresham suffered its first multiple homicides in the execution-style slaying of three women early in the morning of Jan. 17 at the Leathers' Oil gas station on Orient Drive.

**1994** — Los Angeles earthquake kills 61.

**1994** — O.J. Simpson charged with murder of wife and her friend.

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**Harold Weber, Gresham's 'music man'**

Harold Weber 1909-1999

“So I hope that some friend, who stops growing old
And goes where the streets are all paved with gold
Will reserve a room as be passed by
For the old, old teachers from
Gresham High.”


Harold Weber lived so long and well and did so much that people made the mistake of thinking there were two of him.

Only 20 when he graduated from Oregon State College, he came to Gresham Union High School soon after and worked there 40 years, first in the music department, later as a counselor.

Weber headed up the Gresham City Band, the Legion Band, the Letter Carriers Band, Portland's Al Kader Shrine band, wrote both the Gresham High fight song and the alma mater, and earned a master's degree, winding up as a counselor at Gresham High, retiring in 1975.

About the time of his retirement, he started the Gresham Senior Orchestra with six members. By 1990 it had grown to 50 members.

In addition, Weber played the bugle call for a horse race scene in the movie “Thunderhead,” filmed with Roddy McDowall at the Gresham fairgrounds, and sounded the call for the dog races one year at Multnomah Stadium.

“You had to have the lip to do that,” he said in an interview for the Gresham history book, “or you were gone.”

When he spoke to a Mt. Hood Community College class in 1992, his audience was understandably confused as to how many Webers had worked in Gresham.

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**McIntire forever changed the way Oregon governs**

In 1990 after trying since the 1980s, Gresham resident Don McIntire and his fellow tax revolt campaigners won a 1.5 percent property tax limitation in Oregon in the November election.

The 1990 Yes on 5 campaign went clear back to the 1970s when another East County resident, Ray Phillips, led earlier property tax initiatives in Oregon. Phillips, inspired by Howard Jarvis of California’s Proposition 13, didn’t live to see his measures become law, but McIntire, an athletic club owner, paired with Tom Demneh, a retired math professor, and Frank Eisenzimmer, another Gresham athletic club owner, to see Measure 5 become law after six earlier attempts.

Measure 5 limited property taxes for all non-school governments to a combined rate of $20 per $1,000 of assessment by a constitutional amendment.

While it reduced property tax revenue for schools, it required the state Legislature to replace any lost revenue.

In an interview in the wake of the 1990 election, McIntire said Measure 5 took two years to write, sell and pass. Always “fed up” with what he regarded as excesses of government, McIntire earlier defeated a tax base for the Metropolitan Service District and an urban renewal plan for Gresham. He was never, however, successful as a name on the ballot, failing in an Oregon Senate run in 1980 and for Gresham City Council in 1984.
1990-1999: LEADERS AND LEGACIES

Seven decades of love, three decades of giving

Harold and Mabel Lewis volunteered at Legacy Mount Hood Hospital

Harold Lewis sat there in his volunteer jacket, the color of raspberry parfait in 1998, and in a bald-faced lie said he was a hospital volunteer because his wife "wouldn't give me any golf money, so I had to do something."

He managed to look martyred. His wife, Mabel, just snorted. A lady-like snort, but a snort nonetheless.

The Lewises, both 92 in 1998, had been married 70 years and volunteers for more than 30 years. That spring and summer they marked two big dates: the 25th anniversary of the Legacy Mount Hood Hospital volunteers — Mabel was a founder — and their 70th wedding anniversary.

Sight problems had ended her volunteer work, but Harold — golf money or not — turned up bright and early on Tuesdays to get the hospital started.

Volunteers weren't required until 9 a.m. "But if you can't come when you're needed, why bother?" he said. There at the reception desk, between tasks of shuttling flowers and patients and fielding questions, Harold filled slow periods by working his way back through eight decades of Gresham memories.

He and Mabel remembered a Gresham where they knew everyone in town. A good many of them came to their wedding at the First Methodist Church at the corner of Roberts and Powell on June 24, 1928.

The church is gone. A bank is on the corner, the marriage having lasted longer than the edifice.

About the volunteer group, Mabel took no credit. "If I hadn't done it, someone else would have," she said. She took up volunteering in 1964. Harold owned Lewis Meat Market in the Piggly Wiggly at Cleveland and Powell.

They raised their children — Jack and Jill — at a home on Johnson Creek, along with dozens of other kids attracted to water, their children and them.

Mabel and Harold Lewis lived in Gresham for 80 years. "For so long," Mabel said, "we knew everybody in town."

One of them was Mike McKeel — school board member, dentist, developer, Gresham Citizen of the Year. Mabel and Harold remembered him as the "orneriest little son-of-a-so-and-so."

"He never lied about it, though," Harold grinned remembering the red-headed imp. "He took your vegetables out of the garden, he'd tell you he did."

"This was a wonderful town," Harold added in a wistful note that indicated a "but." Then he said, "I don't like it now. Everything's too big."

He and Mabel, of course, added more than 40 descendents to the number.

"For so long," Mabel said, "we knew everybody in town."

"We knew most of the people between 122nd and Mount Hood," he added. That came from being 30 years in the same business. And in the same church, First Methodist, as well as Eastern Star and Amaranth. And at the golf course.

They both came to town about the same time, she in 1920, he in 1925 from Canada. His Canadian schooling put him behind, so she was two years ahead of him in high school. She had beautiful eyes and high cheekbones and a body made for the flapper dress. He wore his hair straight back like Rudolph Valentino, was keen-eyed and a sharp dresser.

He enrolled as a junior in Gresham High at the age of 19 and zipped right through his courses. They kept the same friends for years and years.

And because they lived side by side, she was the girl next door. If it wasn't Kismet, then it was "Our Town."

She worked at The Gresham Outlook doing bookkeeping and working in the bindery for 35 cents an hour. He drove a laundry truck until he learned the meat business.

He still eats all the beef he wants. His son, Jack, is a meat cutter. So much for cholesterol.

A long marriage, she said, required a "lot of bitten tongues," because "we don't always agree with each other," he said.

"He's a good listener," she said, then added, "I don't think he always hears me."

He snorted.

East County Weather: STORMS

Gresham's history of legendary storms

The 2004 storm was worst since the 1972 storm, expert says

Snow storms pile up in drifts of memories, leaving people to argue away the long winter nights about which was the coldest, deepest, longest.

Recent memory serves well in the case of a week of ice and snow in January 2004. It was a storm that toppled trees and crumpled roofs, stranded trucks and brought Portland television broadcasters out to the ice rink of Interstate 84 to skate around with their microphones.

Gresham weather expert George Miller said the storm was probably "one of the worst since 1971-72 or 1968-69."

The 2004 storm struck early Tuesday, Jan. 6, sending a 100-foot tree into Robert Currier's Gresham home in the Hollybrook neighborhood. Windblown snow and ice in areas farther from the Columbia Gorge closed both Eastside and Westside MAX lines, shut down Portland International Airport and stopped nearly 1,000 trucks at Troutdale when Interstate 84 closed from Troutdale to LaGrande. When the truck stops filled up, Wal-Mart in Wood Village opened its parking lot to the stranded long-haul vehicles.

Snow-CAP quickly ran out of money to help people with their energy bills, and some households opened cupboards to find that wind-whipped snow had been blown in through vents. Freezing pipes ruptured, causing damage at Reynolds High School. And as the load of snow and ice increased, roofs began to collapse under the weight. The Gresham Fred Meyer saw shoppers evacuated when clogged drains allowed ice and water to accumulate. Legacy Mount Hood Hospital saw 40 people for weather-related injuries on Jan. 7 and 50 the next day. About 11,000 households were without power.

The first sign of melting did not come until Friday, when after three days of idleness, the trucks began to unscramble themselves and move east out of Troutdale. Weather statistics show that the winter of 1992-1993 as one of the snowiest. The big surprise was that much of it came after Valentine's Day. Snow began falling about 10 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 15. When it stopped at 2 p.m. the next day, Gresham had 5.8 inches, a record for 24-hour period in February. Truck traffic piled up at Troutdale to await the reopening of Interstate 84 through the gorge, but the late-winter storm was short-lived.

The all-time record snowfall for a single day, though, was 10.6 inches in a 24-hour period on Jan. 13, 1950. That winter was a dilly with more than 40 inches of snow closing the Columbia River Gorge. Corbett residents could sled off their rooftops and down the drifts that were piled to the eaves of their homes.

Outlook writer Lloyd McMullen labeled it the "best darned snow and windstorm" to hit the area in seven years. At least 40 cars were marooned on Sandy Boulevard. The temperature in Gresham was reported at 11 degrees, and the snow measured here was 13 inches.

The storm struck so quickly on Friday that Fairview Grade School, which had opened that morning, made plans at noon to board its students in the school rather than risk sending children home in the storm. However, a brief lull that afternoon allowed the buses to roll.

In the Columbia River Gorge, two Multnomah County sheriff's deputies suffered frostbitten ears trying to help stranded travelers, and a county snowplow carved a path up Larch Mountain Road to rescue a woman who needed to go to the hospital. The Columbia River froze, leaving only a small channel of water open below Bonneville Dam.

The Columbia River Gorge is often the checkpoint when winter weather hits. Beginning Jan. 7, 1980, a snow storm — mixed with a great deal of freezing rain in East Multnomah County — dumped about a foot of snow on Portland and caused more than 40 stranded travelers to seek shelter at Bonneville Dam. The weight of the snow collapsed roofs of two tree grading warehouses at J. Frank Schmidt & Son Nursery, forced the creation of emergency shelters in Corbett and Gresham, and caused the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office to issue a travel advisory that said, simply, "Stay out of East Multnomah County."

The storm that stunned many newcomers to east Multnomah County was the two-day blizzard in the week between Christmas and New Year's, the winter of 1968-69. Drifts on Main Avenue in Gresham were 6 to 7 feet high, the U.S. mail was stopped cold, dairies discontinued their home deliveries and the Columbia Gorge towns — Corbett, Troutdale, Wood Village and Fairview — shut down until the thaw.

Frank Smith, the Portland General Electric division superintendent, said conditions were worse in the blizzard than after the Columbus Day storm of 1962.

The tragedy that stuck in people's minds, though, was the death of one of two duck hunters stranded two days on Sand Island across from Rooster Rock in the Columbia River Gorge. Raymond Hurd, a Southeast Portland resident, died of exposure after he and a hunting companion, Clark Regal, became stranded on the island when winds up to 60 mph prevented their getting back to the Oregon shore.

Multnomah County rescue teams made several efforts to reach the two but were forced to wait until the Coast Guard could send a ship from Astoria.

Experts calculated the wind chill factor on the island at 27 degrees below zero.
Red Sunset Maple is crowning jewel of nurseries

J. Frank Schmidt, Jr.
1919-2004

“They say if you fire a bullet at the first tree in the row at a Schmidt farm, that bullet will cut through every tree in the row.”

—Anonymous, envious nurseryman talking about J. Frank Schmidt Jr.

There may have been a lot of kids who passed through Kirby Brumfield Sr.’s agriculture classes at Gresham High who never turned a shovel of dirt. But in his retirement, Brumfield liked to count up the number of his “boys” who made good.

J. Frank Schmidt Jr., who died in 2004 at the age of 85, was still driving arrow-straight tree rows in a dusty station wagon in his 80s. He would be at the top of the list of Brumfield’s graduates.

Installed in 1993 in the hall of fame of the American Association of Nurserymen, Schmidt reaped scores of honors for his work. And he changed the color of this country with his Red Sunset Maple, one of America’s most popular shade trees.

J. Frank Schmidt & Son Co. in Boring (the nursery bears the name of Schmidt’s father) is the largest grower of shade and flowering trees in the nation. The green of Schmidt’s deciduous trees and the flaming fall shade of his Red Sunset Maple are part the nation’s landscape. At its peak, Schmidt had seven farms covering 3,000 acres of ground employing more than 600 people. The firm holds 30 patents or shared patents related to tree-growing and nursery processes.

The Oregon Garden pavilion at Silverton carries the Schmidt name and received its biggest boost in a $500,000 gift from the J. Frank Schmidt Family Charitable Trust.

The trust marks the beginning of the Schmidt story. In 1946, Frank and Evelyn Schmidt married and started their nursery on 10 acres near Troutdale. Schmidt began working with his father. “My father said I had rocks in my head when I started the business,” he said once.

That original 10 acres was sold to establish the family trust, which shares the wealth with horticultural and charitable causes, giving hundreds of thousands of dollars back to the community.

A farmer at heart, Schmidt developed the Red Sunset Maple, one of top street trees in the nation, through process of selection.

He explained once that his nursery grew because of post-war demand for landscaping materials. “It used to be in Eastern Oregon you would build a home and that was it. Now landscaping is taken for granted.”

The Schmidts moved out to Bluff Road to the Hood Acres headquarters farm, where they still lived at the “back of the store?” and he had ground enough to grow corn, dahlias and gladiolius for his workers and most of the rest of East Multnomah County.


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1990-1999: Leaders and Legacies

Getting people around was their business

Father and son owned 'Blue Bus' line before public transportation put them out of business

"Al Larson smoked cigars. Lee Larson chain-smoked. . . . Every time the shop door opened and the smell of bus fumes and gasoline came in, Lee would lean back in his chair and say, 'God, I love it.'"
— Barbara George, retired dispatcher, School Bus Services.

In the days before TriMet, E.G. "Al" Larson carried people to Portland and back.

Larson owned and operated the "Blue Bus," Portland Stages Inc., a suburban bus service that he and his brother-in-law, George Fourrier, founded in April 1938.

It wasn't just a bus line or just a business but a personal mission. At his death in 1987, his wife Hilda recalled a story: "One time someone called and woke Al up to tell him that their daughter hadn't come home from Portland on the bus. He called down to the Greyhound depot to see if she was there and they said no. But we got dressed and went to Portland anyway and found her, curled up asleep in the corner of a bench. The business was like that then."

It was an indication of Larson's standing in the community that when emerging Portland public transit put Larson out of business in 1970, local sympathies were with Larson and his blue buses.

Larson then retreated to a tiny Powell Boulevard office to run a string of 40 old yellow school buses, previously a small adjunct of the company. Though he had told his son Lee that that such a life was "too hard," he asked Lee to return from a teaching job in Hawaii to help.

The Larsons raised School Bus Services from the ashes of the old bus line. Lee Larson, who says that his father taught him to work from earliest childhood, built the Gresham company to be the fourth largest school transportation contract service in the nation. When Lee Larson sold the business to Ryder Student Transportation in 1996, its parting gift to the Gresham-Barlow School District Foundation was $250,000.

The younger Larson memorialized his father in the company newsletter, pointing out that Al Larson, while running his bus company, helped build the Mount Hood Kiwanis Camp for handicapped children. He was a member of Gresham's original Planning Commission, president of the Gresham Chamber when that group hired its first manager, a lay leader and Sunday school teacher in the Methodist Church and a five-year member of the Gresham High School Board.

Al Larson did miss out World War II. "When he tried to enlist," wrote his son, "he was told he was more important to the country in transportation.

Nest egg launches arts center

Jean Elkington

When the estate of Jean Elkington was settled after her death in 1998, the Gresham woman's final gift to her hometown amounted to $425,000, intended as seed money for the Gresham Center for the Arts.

The nest egg to launch a Gresham performing arts center counts every penny ever pinched by Jean Elkington, daughter of Gresham Mayor James Elkington and his wife, Madeline.

"It wasn't inherited, either," said her second cousin, Jim Hessel. "It was hers that she put away and invested. She bought little eggs, for instance. No AA size for her. She sent you to Bi-Mart if Assure was cheaper there."

Frugality was in Elkington's blood. Her father, remembered her relative, Bill Hessel, had carried a fishing creel that was at least 50 years old "and smelled like it."

At her death, Elkington, who never married, left an estate of more than $1 million. Her church, Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist in Rockwood, got $140,000. The rest was divided between the Oregon Historical Society, which used a considerable chunk for a traveling exhibit around the state, and Gresham, her hometown.

Nike World Games

The Nike World Masters Games attracted nearly 10,000 athletes and visitors to the Gresham area for two weeks in August 1996. Gresham hosted cycling, orienteering, swimming and water polo during the international competitions.

Left, Jerry Ross and John Keller won gold medals on a slowpitch softball team.
2000—Present: Loss And Renewal

Team effort sprouts a sports park

Gradin family donates land that will become community sports park

At Gresham Community Sports Park, the difference between fields and playing fields will be about three generations. Three sons of the Gradin family, who missed turning out for sports because they were needed on the family farm, see the land they worked used for play.

In 2002 Rod Gradin, a retired physics and chemistry teacher, was taking his grandson to volunteer on work days at the developing 33-acre park. "I got to turn out for baseball once," remembers the Gresham High graduate. "But football was during potato season, and then we were getting ready for berries when basketball came."

No doubt, though, that the six Gradin

Members of the Air National Guard, local nurseries and hired workers from the Sports Authority place donated turf from the recent World Cup soccer games at Gresham's Gradin Community Sports Park in October 2003.

Pardon Our Dust!

Gresham Obstetrics & Gynecology is adding 4,000 square feet to our women's wellness center.

In addition to comprehensive women's healthcare, we will be offering:

- Prenatal & Therapeutic Massage
- Acupuncture
- Naturopathic Medicine
- Laser Hair Removal
- Laser Leg Vein Removal
- Enhanced Skin Rejuvenation
- Obagi Skincare Systems
- Ibici support stockings
- 3D/4D Ultrasound
- Bone Density Scanning
- In Office Laboratory

Our Health Care Professionals pictured left to right:
Michelle Champagne CNM, Douglas Blatchford MD, Kelly Carter MD, Anne Knudsen MD, and Sandra Collis DO.

Gresham Obstetrics & Gynecology P.C.
24850 SE Stark Street Suite 200, Gresham 503-661-0464
**2000-Present: LOSS AND RENEWAL**

**Park: Gradin farm once covered 96 acres**

Continued from page 87

boys and one daughter, all raised on the farm at Palmquist and Hogan roads, got plenty of exercise. Mel and Amy Gradin asked the Lord for children and got a team of farm hands, their own family band and four missionaries. All of their offspring made a personal sacrifice to see the farm where they grew up become a park.

It once seemed inevitable that the property on Hogan Road would be bristling with apartments. The zoning was in place, and the developers were waiting.

“We were negotiating to sell for apartments when the city (of Gresham) said they were interested, so we broke off the negotiations,” says Rod Gradin. The result was that the family got considerably less for the land. The bonus was that their father, Mel Gradin, got to stay in his home on his farm, earning the right to die two months short of his 95th birthday on Jan. 9, 2000, in the same room where he was born.

The family sees the sports park as something unique and not just another apartment unit. The land is marked with the artifacts of their lives, the barn where they sorted spuds and packaged berries for the quick-freeze market and a big fir tree that was once a family Christmas tree. After the holidays, Mel Gradin put the little table-top tree outside under a pear tree with the intention of planting it. That never happened, but the fir crept out of the pot and took root anyway.

At its peak, the Gradin farm included 96 acres. It began in 1896 when Erik and Hannah Gradin bought 20 logged-off acres near Gresham. Reasoning that the area would have north-south roads, Erik Gradin positioned his house by the North Star so that it would sit in perfect alignment with the roads that would come later. According to "Gresham, Stories of Our Past," the neighbors threw a noisy party, a charivari, after the Gradins' 1897 wedding, an event so boisterous that a bullet was fired through the upstairs window of their new home.

The old home was remodeled many times, ultimately expanding to seven bedrooms, to accommodate a family that now ranges in age from 69 to 52.

Curiously, farm life taught the Gradins about diversity and other cultures. "The influence for several of us to be missionaries was the cross-cultural experience on the farm," says Denny Gradin.

"We always had three of four hired hands living on the place. We had migrant cabins with people who came back year after year. We had a Japanese family, the Sadanagas, who lived on the property, and Japanese neighbors across the street, the Okitas. We had a couple of black families, and an Indian (Native American) family. We lived with them. Dad always said the color of the skin didn't make any difference as long as they could work."

First published in The Outlook in 2002.
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LOOKING AHEAD: GRESHAM ARTS CENTER

An architect's rendering shows the design of the Gresham Center for the Arts, which is planned for Historic Downtown Gresham.

At age 100, community will get new 'heart'

Gresham's 100th birthday celebration isn't just a chance to reflect on the past. The community also is looking forward, which is why the Gresham Center for the Arts has been designated as the city's "Centennial Legacy."

Close to restaurants, businesses, parks and light rail, the arts center will be a showcase for performers, a center for learning and a place for community and commerce.

More than 1,000 local citizens participated in designing a center that combines a performance hall, concert venue and conference center — complete with galleries, meeting rooms and classrooms. A one-acre community plaza and amphitheater will surround the facility, which is envisioned as a new heart for the community.

Designed by Ankrom Moisan Architects, the center will be built on 2.2 acres in Historic Downtown Gresham. Backers of the center envision it as a location for theater, music, festivals, hands-on art classes, farmers and craft markets, business conferences, family gatherings and events.

Local and regional organizations and businesses have already expressed interest in renting space in the facility and contributing to its long-term financial stability.

The business community views the arts center as a catalyst for further development of downtown Gresham, while arts groups say it will expand cultural opportunities in the area.

"A center for the arts is intrinsic to the makeup of a city," says Sue O'Halloran, a board member of the Gresham Downtown Development Association. "This center will become a focal point that will energize investment in Gresham and enliven the vitality of downtown."

Dennis Ogan, executive director of Oregon Lyric Opera, says his group hopes to call the arts center home.

"The flexibility and intimacy of this new theater are perfect for our new company's innovative approach and cabaret-style productions," Ogan says.

Land for the center was donated by the Fourier-Larson family.

The city of Gresham is contributing environmental restoration, project management and design. The Elkington Trust also has made a major contribution. Altogether, the center's supporters have raised $3.5 million toward their goal of $14.5 million.
2000-Present: Loss and Renewal

Gresham mourns in wake of 9/11

Sky above Troutdale airport becomes eerily empty as planes are ordered to stay put

The events of Sept. 11, 2001, which came to be called "9/11," sent Gresham residents to the local churches and the blood banks, and to join in a national movement to show the flag. One local resident painted her house red, white and blue.

People gathered together in downtown Gresham to mourn the dead. And numerous local people with skills to offer went east to lend a hand to the victims in New York.

- The Tuesday announcement of events in New York closed up offices and shut the doors at Bonneville Dam and other critical sites. Gresham's National Guard Armory went into lock-down, and the Troutdale airport went quiet as planes were ordered out of the sky.

Local officials met to sort out the crisis and consider how to respond, and a community gathering of more than 1,000 residents met in downtown Gresham on Sept. 15 for a show of sympathy and support.

With airlines shut down, many Gresham residents who were traveling were stranded. Mt. Hood Community College's volleyball team, unable to fly home, rented two vans and made the drive from Phoenix, Ariz.

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2000-Present: Loss and Renewal

Katie Harman wins crown and city’s heart

In the wake of terrorist attacks on the United States, Gresham’s own Katie Harman was crowned Miss America 2002 in Atlantic City, N.J., Saturday, Sept. 22, 2001.

Harman, then 21 and a relative newcomer to the pageant scene, competed in Atlantic City as Miss Oregon and was the state’s first Miss America.

She was the second Gresham woman to complete in the Miss America pageant since Betty JoAnn Hupfer, a Mt. Hood Community College student from Milwaukee, was crowned Miss Oregon in 1975.

Harman grew up in Gresham and graduated as a valedictorian from Centennial High School in 1999.

Auto dealer, mayor formed tough team

Retired Gresham Ford dealer Chester A. McRobert, Jr., 73, died in 2003 at his Gresham home with a 1957 Thunderbird in his garage.

McRobert sold Mustangs and Thunderbirds to Gresham residents until 1998. His wife of 38 years, former Gresham Mayor Gussie McRobert, is a Democrat. He was a Republican.

"But it worked because he was a moderate Republican and I am a centrist Democrat," Gussie McRobert reflected. "Though there was one president we just could never talk about."

McRobert Motor Co. was a Gresham name from 1939, when C.A. McRobert Sr. established the business, through 1979, when his son sold it.

In the process, automobile dealers like the McRoberts and Chevrolet dealer Ross Fanning changed the face of Gresham. When a 1963 fire burned McRobert’s downtown location at the corner of Main Avenue and Powell Boulevard (just west of Main City Park) the dealers forged a plan to move east on Powell Boulevard, forming what is now Gresham’s auto row.

He was born in Portland Sept. 13, 1930, just a few months after his father had purchased the Gresham dealership. He attended Gresham schools, graduating from Gresham High in 1948.

Barber Bob Wright carried on family tradition for 42 years

Bob Wright’s baby blues dripped tears on a few heads in 2002 as he wrapped up a lifetime in downtown Gresham’s Bon-Ton Barbershop. "Bon-Ton, Bob here," he said, answering phones and scheduling customers for the last time.

Nurtured in his father’s barbershop — never tap on the window when a barber is giving a shave; never talk to another man in another barber’s chair — Wright observed the etiquette that did not permit a barber to sit in his own barber chair. It didn’t look good, he said.

A Wright had cut hair in Gresham since 1937, when a shave cost 15 cents and a haircut was 25 cents. Orville Wright came to town that year with his skinny little big-eared son who wore ties with his overalls and shiny shoes in the barbershop.

Though his father counseled him not to take up the craft, Bob Wright went to Moller Barber college in 1958, apprenticed for 18 months and stepped into his late father’s shoes at the Bon-Ton in 1960.

"My mother once asked my dad, what kind of name is that, Bon-Ton?" Bob reminisces. "And my dad said he didn’t know for sure but it was some kind of Frenchie name."

In 1986 Wright uprooted his shop, moving from Second Avenue to Powell Boulevard. Wright’s shop, always spare and clean and airy, sported a few mementos of life in Gresham. On the wall was an autographed photo of the late actor Roddy McDowall, and tucked in the corner a snapshot of McDowall, child actor, and Bob Wright, child extra, in Gresham in 1944 during the filming of "Thunderhead — Son of Flicka."

Twelve cents — two pennies and a dime — were taped to the wall. "I found them on the street and thought they’d be lucky," Wright says. And over in the corner, his dad’s old cash register, permanently registering "no sale" but the wood-en drawer still good for holding bills.

First published in 2002
Bethel Baptist destroyed in blaze

Gresham historians lost another dream to fire May 21, 2004, when an arson set blaze destroyed the 120-year-old Bethel Baptist in Main City Park, claiming the city's first National Register site and likely its oldest public building.

Gresham historian Utahna Kerr and Leo Larsen, a retired carpenter who saw to the restoration and raising of the steeple, cried on each other's shoulders as they watched the preservation work of nearly three decades spiral away in black smoke.

"Karen Caton (wife of the fire chief) saw me there and came up and put her arm around me," said Pat Stone, the society's director, who has twice mourned the loss of a treasured building. She was there on the morning after the historic Linnean station burned in 1995. That blaze was believed to have been started by vagrants.

Later, city officials demolished the remains of the church, knocking down the foundation and loading the charred wood into containers in order to clear the park of hazards. The hasty demolition had historians scurrying to rescue a few artifacts from the drop boxes.

Historical society members Sharon Wood and Andrew Insley scaled the high sides of the containers and salvaged a few artifacts, old glass insulators, square nails, a corner of the steeple and remnants of an old sign stored in the building.

In its beginning Gresham had no church building; the school house was the church for all denominations — Methodist, Baptist, Dunkards, Free Methodists and others.

During protracted revivals in the winter months, children's schoolbooks were molested. They were written in, torn and even carried away by a rough outside element who came for no other purpose. Leading church members of all denominations came together and decided to build a kind of union church.

Henry Metzger donated the land for the purpose and for the extension of the old cemetery; however, he deeded it to the Missionary Baptists, which was organized in 1882, and the German Baptists, commonly known as Dunkards.

The church building was to be paid for with donations. All gave freely, however; Johnson Cleveland was most liberal in his donation.

This church was built in 1884 and was dedicated as the Bethel Baptist church. It still stands with improvements where it was built, in better condition than then. Services are held there now only for the Baptist denominations.

G.W. Metzger — 1941
TIMELINE CONTINUED

1944 — A brick facing hides the old church.

1978 — First Baptist Church members plan a building, alerting the Gresham Historical Society that the original chapel is intact inside. Gresham Optimist Club removes the brick to reveal it.

1979 — Raising about $15,000, the society moves the chapel to Main City Park in August.

1980 — Efforts to protect the building from weather fail, and the church, still on temporary cabling, suffers in winter, its stained glass windows broken by vandals. A foundation is poured. "It must have appeared that the vandals were destroying it faster than we could repair the damage," said society president Jim Chase.

1982 — Historical Society launches a brick sale to fund church restoration.

1985 — Leo Larsen, Ralph Clinton and several carpenters' unions join forces to seal up the old church and restore the steeple.

1986 — The church is topped out with a new steeple in a public ceremony.

1996 — The dedication of the brick memorial wall.

2003 — New stairs and railings are built. The bill was not yet paid at the time the church burned.

Compiled from: First Baptist Church centennial history, 1982; Gresham Outlook; "Gresham: Stories of Our Past;" and contributions from Katherine Osgood Butler.

Mormon chapel was ‘labor of love’

Sorting the ashes of a disastrous fire that destroyed their Hogan Chapel on May 5, 2003, also stirred memories for members of the Mormon church in Gresham.

In the wreckage were embers of boards reclaimed from the 1948 Vanport Flood, pieces of roofing nailed on by amateurs under the suffering eye of a professional, and money raised by "chicken pick'n' work crews, all the effort of two remodelings and an organ chosen because it would not transmit country-western tunes following the Sacrament hymn.

The 50-year-old Hogan Chapel, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, was the first in East Multnomah County. To mark the loss of the structure that cost so much in sweat and tears, church members agreed that a record was needed. A committee headed by Rich Monnie gathered, wrote, edited and printed a history and a historical video for a June 8 commemorative gathering which drew 466 people to listen and reminisce.

The chapel, says Monnie, "was a labor of love."

"I went through there," he added. Since Hogan Chapel was built, the church in East Multnomah and Clackamas counties has expanded, and many of those who were reunited for the remembrance lingered to visit with old friends.

The fire started on Monday, May 5, in the north attic over the chapel, an inaccessible spot which led investigators to conclude that the cause was accidental. Mormons were comforted that the fire was an accident and "not the product of a hateful heart," adding "we have been touched by an outpouring of kindness from so many neighbors since the fire."

The sympathetic response to the loss of the chapel was marked contrast to a story told by Fae Olson about the beginnings of the Mormon church in the area. In the mid-1930s, Olson said, two members of the Relief Society set out to visit scattered Mormon families in the Milwaukee area. They were on foot, the day was late and they were tired, so Sister Nell Emmett hailed a passing car. The driver who gave them a ride asked them what they were doing. The women responded that they had been visiting the sick, but when he learned they were Mormons, he slammed on the brakes and ordered them out of the car.

Portland's first Mormon church was finished in 1929, and the first Gresham congregation of four families held Sunday School in the mid-1930s in the old Eagles Hall above what is now Amston Furniture. The Gresham Branch was created in 1940. The first Sacrament meetings began in 1940-41. By then the members were in an old white church on Kelso Road, rented without plumbing or electricity for $3 a month. In 1942, they moved to the Grove Hall in Orient and gained basic utilities.

They set about raising money for a building. Because of wartime gas rationing during World War II, they held a potluck dinner almost every week between Sunday School and Sacrament meetings, asking members to bring a dish but also to pay the meal. "You had to buy your own food," marveled Monnie. But that fund-raising effort and the church's Green and Gold balls were pleasures compared to other efforts.

Members themselves out to do inventory at Meier & Frank or to go into poultry barns at night to catch and crate chickens for shipment to processors. The latter chore, called "chicken pick'n'," was remembered by Larry Kerr.

"...Men covered their mouths with bannanas or masks as they gathered chickens by their legs using the right hand. They'd switch the chickens to the left hand until they had six or seven chickens in all. Then they'd haul them out to waiting trucks where other men placed the fowl in cages. The chickens didn't take to this easily and stirred up a cloud of dust, straw, manure that left the men itching and coughing for days afterwards."

By September 1947, the branch met in the Gresham Odd Fellows Hall on Powell Boulevard. It was the 1948 flood, which took out the community of Vanport and what is now Portland's Delta Park, that gave the branch its building material. Purchasing a wrecked 14-unit apartment building for $1,800, the church salvaged the lumber in nail-pulling parties and broke ground on 3 acres of donated land on Hogan Road in 1949. They had $12.35 in cash.

Hogan Chapel was dedicated on Oct. 14, 1951. All of those things happened there and more. The church grew and grew. Elder Keith Lloyd, a professional contractor, came from Idaho to supervise the 1964 renovation and construction of a new wing and supervise volunteer workers.

The Hogan Road neighborhood also provided a surprise for the worshippers. An old electric organ tended to pick up the broadcast of KRDR, the radio station next door.

When the organ was turned off, "for about four seconds you would hear whatever was being broadcast over KRDR," remembered Roger Arnell. "...the silence following the Sacrament hymn would be broken with strains of country music. On other occasions we even heard commercials for cigarettes and beer."
Don and Marie Eklund both attended Gresham High School in the 1940's. At the age of 17, Don joined the navy. When he returned home he went to the bank in Gresham where Marie was working with his duffel bag over his shoulder. After he made his deposit he asked Marie "How would you like to hop in my duffel bag and leave with me." Marie said to her friend "Oh what a smartie that Don is."

They married in 1947. The rest is history.

They farmed strawberries and vegetables in the Gresham-Sandy area for 20 years.

On August 30, 1968 they opened Heidi's Coffee Shop on the Mt. Hood Freeway at Highway 212.

The original restaurant seated 54 people. After two successful years, it has been expanded to seat 150. During the next three years; a gift shop, bakery, deli and boutique were added and the name was changed to Heidi's Swiss Village, Inc.

A Swiss decor was chosen because Marie's grandparents were from Switzerland and, being so close to Mt. Hood, it seemed an appropriate choice, and Heidi's as the name of the restaurant seemed the most familiar name association with Switzerland.

In 1980, the Eklunds purchased the present location here in Gresham and Heidi's of Gresham was established.

In November 1982, the Eklunds sold Heidi's Swiss Village to Canteen of Oregon.

In 1985, Heidi's adjacent property was leased to the Pony Soldier Motel chain and the restaurant was remodeled to accommodate a larger gift shop and banquet facilities. We now seat approximately 300.

We have about 85 employees, many who have been with us for over 25 years. We feel that we have been fortunate in having a very loyal, friendly crew, who have had a big part in making Heidi's a success.

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Outlook August 29, 1968 - BERRY FARMER
Don Eklund and wife, Marie have switched to restaurant life. Their Swiss chalet style Heidi's opens Friday five minutes east of Gresham on Highway 26.
**What A Difference 100 Years Makes!**

**Ford Trucks VS Horses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price - Ford Model T</th>
<th>$665</th>
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**Truck Operating Costs Per Mile**

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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gasoline - 11 Mile per gal., $.22 per gal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oil - 5 Qts. per 500 mi., $.20 Qt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lubrication - $.50 per 500 mi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depreciation - 1/5 of cost of tires per year</td>
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<td>Tire allowance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repairs</td>
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<td>Interest - 6% of third year value</td>
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<td>Insurance at 5% of value</td>
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**Cost of Keeping Horses per Horse**

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<td>Manure Credit</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Cost per Head</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Net Cost 8 Horses per year</strong></td>
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**Savings Per Year**

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<td><strong>Total Savings First Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1557.43</strong></td>
</tr>
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