

Gresham Historical Quarterly Newsletter

As the Influenza Pandemic of 1918 raged in the United States, masks of gauze and cheesecloth became the facial front lines in the battle against the virus. The people of Gresham and nearly everywhere else were obliged to wear masks, just as it is today.

In the 30 plus years we have been in the Carnegie Library Building in Gresham, this has been one of the most challenging years we have ever faced.

No matter how much we would like to have our annual meeting and history nights, etc. it is currently not possible to have gatherings of more than 10 people. We miss seeing you and talking face-to-face.

However, the museum is open 5 days-a-week and we need volunteers to staff the museum and to greet our visitors. Give us a call and let us know when you are available: 503-661-0347.

Director's Letter **P. 3**

President's Message **P. 3**

Museum News **P. 5**

Notes from the Archives: Jazz Legend
Floyd Standifer **P. 6-7**

History Highlight: Gresham Still Misses
Lady Liberty **P. 8-9**



Cover Image: The Pandemic of 1918, GHS 1884A

Summer 2020

About Gresham Historical Society & Museum

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The Gresham Historical Society is a private, non-profit organization that manages the Gresham Historical Museum and special collections library and archive, located in the historic Carnegie Library building in Historic Downtown Gresham.

Founded in 1976 and funded through donations from the community, the Gresham Historical Society was run exclusively by volunteers for the majority of its history.

In 2010, Multnomah County voters passed a property tax levy to support local history. Those levy funds pay for exhibitions and for us to have a full-time staff member which helps keep us free and open to the public.

Our mission is to collect, preserve, and share our local history.

Hours of Operation

Wednesday 10 am – 4 pm

Thursday 10 am – 4 pm

Friday 10 am – 4 pm

Saturday 10 am – 4 pm

Sunday 12 pm – 4 pm

Closed Monday & Tuesday



410 N Main Avenue

Gresham, OR 97030-7212

503-661-0347

www.greshamhistorical.org

Volunteers

Claudia Andrews

Mike Andrews

Silvie Andrews

April Avery

Heather Bouchee

Joe Breniser

Dorothy Douglas

Sandy Fancher

Beth Gardner

Judy Han

Wayne Horine

Andrew Insley

Bonnie Jepsen

Liz Jones

Ila Lane

Skip Larson

Liz Morse

Teresa Squires -Osborn

Olivia Schubert

Alice Simonis

Janet Westberg

Committees

Collection Stewardship

Claudia Andrews, Community Representative

Silvie Andrews, Community Representative

Teresa Squires-Osborn

Rose Marie Noojin, Board Representative

Eellitta Stone, Board Representative

Facilities, Maintenance, & Risk Management Committee

James Card, Board Representative

Kirk French, Board Representative

Wayne Horine, Community Representative

Letter from the Director

Greetings to our valued Members and Supporters!

Even though the museum was closed for nearly seven months, a lot of changes have happened since our last newsletter. We welcomed a new Museum Director, Mark Moore, who was born in East County and grew up in Gresham, when Greta Smith Wisniewski resigned in February. We wish her the very best in all of her future endeavors.

With our dedicated volunteers leading the way, we have continued to plug away on the Collection Improvement Project and fixed the stubborn, 25-year-old crack in the basement wall. These projects have been funded through your generous contributions and grants by the Oregon Heritage Commission.

Our Collection Stewardship Committee continues to repack and reorganize our collections and artifacts in our newly remodeled basement. We were able to purchase new archival boxes and packing materials to better protect our objects. Then we were able to purchase new shelving units where we will rehouse the entire collection once we've finished with the assessment process. A second grant funded the purchase and installation of a new temperature control unit to help keep our collection storage space cool and dry. A temperature controlled environment mitigates the risk of mold as well as warping, expanding, and shrinking of certain materials (such as wood) that can occur with changes in temperature and humidity in an uncontrolled environment. New archival-quality boxes and packing materials will ensure that objects in the collection are preserved for years to come.

Last, but not least, don't forget to renew your museum membership! The support and donations from our members and patronage helps keep our doors open. We greatly appreciate your support, without which we would not be able to do the work of making history happen. We hope to see you soon!

Warm regards,

Mark Moore, Museum Director

President's Message

Greetings,

Fall, brightly colored leaves, apple cider, cooler weather and looking forward to the holidays.

Thank you for your quick response and vote on the amended Gresham Historical Society Bylaws. We are currently updating some communication methods with our members and have amended other items in the Bylaws. Another area updated is how we keep track of our membership and we have purchased a *Contact Management System*. This fully automated membership information system will contain and track, donor information, dues payment, and each member's information all in one place.

During this COVID-19 time we concentrated on fulfilling and completing two Oregon Grant projects. One grant was to repair the basement leak and the other was to fund the shelving in the basement, putting together shelving, connecting dehumidifiers and stacking and rearranging items and artifacts from our collections. All the work, maintenance, assembling racks and making necessary repairs was all accomplished by our many volunteers. Also, the volunteer hours over what the grants required, also benefits the museum. Thank you to all our dedicated and valuable membership volunteers, none of this would be possible without you. We are looking to fill two positions on the board, let us know if you are interested. Also, we need storage space for our artifact collections and would appreciate your ideas or suggestions.

The Gresham Historical Museum is OPEN! Welcome back to the museum and our new exhibits. *Gresham 100 Years Ago*, *Radios*, *Meet Me Under the Clock* (Meier and Frank Clocks) also memorable products, signs, merchandise, etc. from Fred Meyer's contributions to Gresham's history.

Making plans to see everyone at our Annual Membership Meeting, in May of 2021. Also in 2021 here are a few other planned events: *High Tea* - on the Museum lawn or very *High Tea* - in the Museum, a *Speakers Series* - featuring fellow Board members: Pete White, Utahna Kerr and/or Guest Speakers, and *BINGO* - in partnership with Spinella's, every Thursday afternoon. Thank you for your membership and continued support of the Gresham Historical Society.

Carol Nielsen

President



Become a Member

Not a member already? Becoming a member is easy! Just fill out the Membership Enrollment Form, bring it by, or mail it in to the museum.

Membership at the Gresham Historical Society supports the continued preservation and sharing of our local history.

For more information, contact us at 503-661-0347 or info@greshamhistorical.org

Membership includes

- Membership card
- Subscription to the *Gresham Historical Quarterly Newsletter*
- First notice on all public programming and events

Choose your membership

Individual \$20

Membership benefits for one adult

Family \$20

Membership benefits for two adults and all family members under 18.

Business Sponsorship \$50

Two membership cards to be used by any employee and your business' logo to appear in the *Gresham Historical Quarterly Newsletter*.

* 10% discount for Seniors, Veterans, & Military Personnel



Membership Enrollment Form

Member name *(Business name for Business Membership)*

Member 2 name *(if Family Membership)*

Street address

City, State, Zip

Home/Cell Phone Work /Cell Phone

Email address

Membership Level

☐ Individual \$20

☐ Business \$50

☐ Family \$20

\$_____ Membership amount *include discounts

\$_____ Additional contribution

\$_____ Total amount

Payment information

Please enclose a check payable to the Gresham Historical Society, and mail it (see address below) or bring it by the museum along with this form. To pay by credit or debit card, please call or come in to the museum.

Gresham Historical Society
410 N Main Avenue
Gresham, OR 97030-7212

Thanks to Our Museum Volunteers



Our Collection Stewardship Committee has been meeting regularly this summer to repack and reorganize our collections.

Featured Exhibits: Life in Gresham 100 Years Ago

The city of Gresham, which was incorporated in 1905, was gifted with a Carnegie library in 1913 by Andrew Carnegie, American industrialist. Two years later, the sixteen-story Meier and Frank "Shopping Center of the Northwest" opened in Portland.

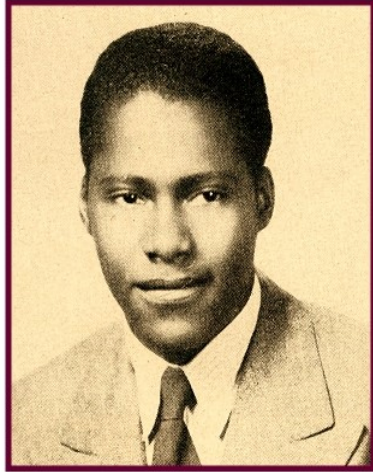
By 1922, entrepreneur Floyd Mack was the proprietor of a new store in Gresham, selling the modern miracle: radio. That same year Fred G. Meyer opened his first store in Oregon. His My-Te-Fine label conveyed his commitment to quality. Meyer opened his first store in Gresham when the Rockwood Store opened in 1958.

Artifacts of each of these landmark businesses can be seen and enjoyed in that same library which became the Gresham History Museum. Hear memories from the Golden Age of Radio and see some of the radios and related items that may have been available from Gresham's first radio store.

See the only remaining original Meier and Frank clocks as well as over 100 artifacts from Meier & Frank including: a lease from 1877 for the first Meier & Frank store at 1st & Yamhill streets; a photo of the first Meier & Frank store; a Meier & Frank ad from 1890; two Meier & Frank clothes hangers from the 1890s; a Meier & Frank billing statement from 1893; shopping receipts from 1893 and 1895; Meier & Frank store catalogs from 1900, 1914 and 1915; an envelope from the New York office of Meier & Frank from 1904 - Meier & Frank was one of the few West Coast stores to maintain a full-time purchasing office in New York City; Meier & Frank correspondence and postcards from the Lewis & Clark Expo - 1905; a serving plate and silverware from the Georgian Room restaurant; a 25-cent personal recording from the recording booth circa 1939; a hat box from the Meier & Frank Millinery Shop; and miscellaneous, photos, postcards, advertising and souvenirs.

Remembering Jazz Legend Floyd Standifer

Gresham High School Graduate



Floyd Standifer

Vice President, Senior Class

Gresham High School, 1946.

by Ken Wilson

From an article previously published in the Gresham Historical Society Newsletter from March 2012

Gresham was known for great jazz festivals but one of the most renowned jazz players in the Pacific Northwest spent his youth here. Floyd Standifer was a magnificent jazz player who was an inspiration to the many people that had the opportunity to know him. A world class performer, he toured Europe with the Quincy Jones Band, played with Ray Charles and Nat "King" Cole and became a fixture on the Seattle jazz scene. He taught music at several colleges until retiring in 2000 and played regularly at the Pampas club, the New Orleans restaurant and with the Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra until his death on January 22, 2007. He was a member of the Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame and was honored by Seattle with two Floyd Standifer days, May 9, 1996 and October 20, 2000 as well as being honored at the 2000 Earshot Jazz Festival by then mayor Paul Schell "for being Seattle's most respected jazz master and premiere bebopper."¹ But before he became a star in Seattle, he began his career playing in Gresham.

Floyd was born January 3, 1929 in Wilmington N.C. His father, Floyd Lee Standifer, was an African Methodist Episcopal Zion pastor who was renowned for his singing voice as he led his church choir at performances. His mother was a schoolteacher. The family moved to Portland in 1936 where Floyd met Bert Turner who worked for the Works Progress Administration teaching children how to play music. Floyd learned to play the trumpet and performed in the 1937 Portland Rose Parade as well as at his father's church where he learned how to sing. The family of six moved to Gresham in 1939 to live in a tar paper covered one-room farmhouse.

Life was not easy growing up during the Great Depression as Floyd recalled, "I learned how to live under the most dire circumstances."² When he finished his chores he would practice the trumpet and saxophone aiming at a nearby hill that would resonate back after 20 to 25 seconds, giving him the opportunity to hear what he had played. He recalls, "As a very young kid, I didn't have anything to do but practice."³

To earn money for college he worked at the Gresham cannery. "Life was demanding," he recalled but he also learned something else that would stay with him for life, "You can always be of value to somebody."⁴ His younger brother James recalls, "He was the one who had to work. I used to run up the road and meet him and he'd let me drive the truck. When we grew up, we used to have a saying, 'Boy---it's long way from Gresham.'"⁵

Throughout high school, Floyd was a member of the chorus and band, winning the second chair trumpet position his sophomore year. He played in the concert and marching bands, performing all kinds of music. Outside of school Floyd played in a dance band known as *The Rhythm Vendors* who performed at Grange halls and dances. Since the band already had a trumpet player, Floyd taught himself to play the alto saxophone. He also continued to sing in high school, his first performance was in an operetta as a Mexican bandit. "It was very, very stupid," he recalls.⁶ He went on to sing ballads with the chorus, performing *As Time Goes By* with the school orchestra his senior year.

Floyd was an excellent student and was well liked and respected in his school. Although he was the only black student, there were never any racial conflicts. He was elected sergeant-at-arms his junior year and vice-president of the 1946 senior class. After high school Floyd enrolled in the physics program at the University of Washington. It was there he heard the music that would become the calling of his life.

Floyd first heard live bebop in Seattle at a place that would become known as the "Birdland" on the corner of 21st and Madison. As he remembers, "Once I heard bebop, that was it. The importance of physics went out the window and in went Charlie Parker."⁷ He became a professional musician in 1954 when he played saxophone, trumpet and electric bass with keyboardist Milt Price at the Flame Tavern. He continued playing there for five years until he received a call from Quincy Jones, whom he had played with in Seattle during the 1940s, to go to Europe for a big band tour. The tour lasted nine months after which Floyd returned to Seattle. He continued to play around town including the 1962 Seattle's World Fair.

Standifer went on to teach from 1965 to 1970 at the Cornish College of the Arts then on to Bremerton's Olympic College. He later went on to the Northwest School where he was head of the arts division from 1980 until he retired in 2000. As part of Earshot's "Roots of Jazz" series Floyd spoke to and performed for thousands of local students. He always gave back to the community and was admired by many. Patti Bown who played piano in Seattle and on the Quincy Jones tour said, "Floyd was always an underrated musician. And he was a lovely guy. If somebody was sick or having a hard time, he would try to be there. It was almost like he was the personification of his father."⁸

Robert Resare, a former classmate who played piano and, along with Jim Hawkings on drums, jammed with Floyd in high school remembers him, "He was a great guy, one of the finest men I have ever known."⁹ Robert talked to him shortly before Floyd died and asked him why he pursued music as a career. Floyd replied, "The music beckoned me."¹⁰ The rest of the jazz world was blessed and happy that it had.

Sources

¹ Stout, Gene. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Jan. 24, 2007.

² Davis, Jessica. Seattle Post-Intelligencer, May 27, 2002.

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ De Barros, Paul. Seattle Times, Jan. 24, 2007.

⁶ Davis.

⁷ Davis.

⁸ DeBarros.

⁹ Wilson, Ken, Interview with Robert Resare, Jan. 21, 2012.

¹⁰ Wilson.



Gresham High School Band 1946. Floyd Standifer is pictured fourth from left in the first row with his trumpet.



Main Avenue at Powell in Gresham, 1919. GHS 1168C

Rent the museum!

The Gresham Historical Museum is the perfect venue for business and personal events!

Built in 1913, the Gresham Carnegie Library is on the National Register of Historic Places and has been acclaimed as one of the finest examples of Tudor architecture in the Portland Metropolitan area.

Standard pricing by attendance*

1-25 guests	\$125
26-45 guests	\$225
45-75 guests	\$375
76-100 guests	\$500

*For first 3 hours. Additional fees may apply for longer rentals, or if the event takes place during museum operation hours.

Flexible rates for members!

Gresham Still Misses Statue of Liberty

Outlook Headline: “Goddess of Liberty Abducted”

A Gresham Outlook headline in 1924 proclaimed “Goddess of Liberty Abducted; Landmark Ruthlessly Wrecked” after Gresham’s city fathers voted to remove the horse trough and statue in a fit of public improvement and road widening nearly 100 years ago when Multnomah County authorities decided to pave muddy, dusty Powell Boulevard. They wanted to expand the right-of-way, which left no place for the horse trough and what it represented just as automobiles were becoming more popular in the area.

Local historians have wished for years that they could find and restore the Statue of Liberty that once stood in the intersection of Main Avenue and Powell Boulevard. Lady Liberty, standing 8-1/2 feet tall, proudly draped in flags and bunting, greeted visitors to Gresham and guarded over the horse trough in mid-intersection of Gresham’s busiest corner. She was the heart of parades and the spirit of celebrations that were held in Gresham for the six years she sat atop the eight-sided horse trough.

So who were the heartless fools who ripped her from her concrete pedestal and jackhammered the quaint old watering trough into bits? It was a divided Gresham City Council, with assistance from the Multnomah County Commissioners. Liberty had stood only six years, purchased in 1918 for \$120 from a wandering Statue of Liberty salesman. Dedicated in May 1918, she was placed on her pedestal on the horse trough 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, Lady Liberty had very few friends at that time. 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 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.

In a council meeting to decide the fate of Lady Liberty, councilors were feeling somewhat contentious and it did not go well for the statue. Council members were upset with voters who had failed to pay for the building of sidewalks and they were upset over the voters’ failure to approve a bond measure to buy land for a new city park. To top it off, councilors were also peeved about numerous complaints about the unsanitary conditions of the outhouses near Main Avenue. Councilors were in no mood to rescue Lady Liberty.

Liberty, they said, would be stored in a city warehouse, and no obstruction whatever would stand in the way of progress at Powell and Main. Rumors abound, but no one knows what happened to Gresham’s Goddess of Liberty 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.

Sources

“A Century of Community, Gresham Oregon 1905-2005.” *Gresham Outlook*



Statue of Liberty. GHS 1213C



Powell looking east. GHS 560C

How to Support the Museum

Gifts and contributions to the Gresham Historical Society support the continued preservation and sharing of our local history.

Monetary Contributions

Your unrestricted gift supports the daily operations of the Gresham Historical Society and the maintenance and preservation of the Historic 1913 Gresham Carnegie Library.

Planned Giving

Your unrestricted recurring gifts provide the predictable, ongoing support that allows the Gresham Historical Society to perform necessary financial planning.

Gifts in Memory or Tribute

Each year, the Gresham Historical Society receives gifts in memorial and tribute. Honor the life and achievements of those in your life through legacy giving.

Appreciated securities or stock

Charitable gifts of stock are a wonderful way to provide ongoing support for the Gresham Historical Society. Check with your tax adviser for details.



www.greshamhistorical.org

Monetary Contribution Form

Name

Street address

City, State, Zip

Home/Cell Phone

Work /Cell Phone

Email address

If memorial gift, Name of honored person(s)

Payment information

☐ Check payable to Gresham Historical Society

Would you like to enroll in Planned Giving?

☐ Yes, please charge my credit/debit card for a recurring donation of \$_____.

Frequency of Planned Giving (Check only one):

☐ Monthly

☐ Quarterly

☐ Bi-monthly

☐ Annually

☐ No, please charge my credit/debit for a one-time donation of \$_____.

☐ American Express

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☐ Mastercard

☐ Visa

Card number

Exp. Date

CVV

Signature

Thank you, 2020 Donors!

We would like to give a special thank you to those who donated to the Gresham Historical Society in 2020! Your financial support helps us fulfill our mission of collecting, preserving, and sharing our local history. Because the Gresham Historical Society does not receive federal or state aid, we could not do our work without the support of donors like you. Thank you for helping make history happen, and keeping our museum—your museum—free and open to the public.

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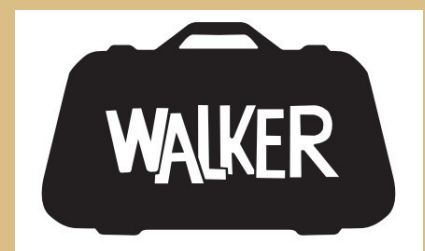
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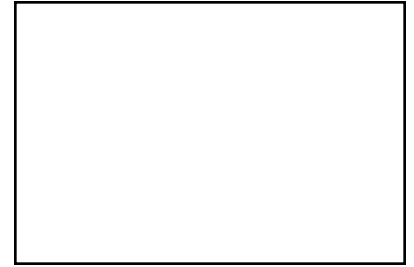
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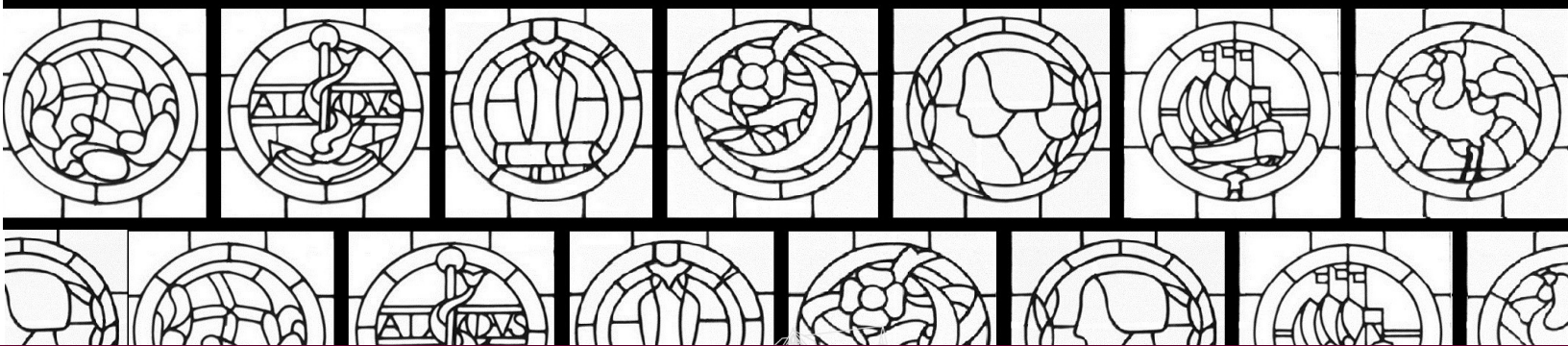


Gresham Historical Society
PO Box 65
Gresham, OR 97030-0011



www.greshamhistorical.org

E-mail: info@greshamhistorical.org



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