

# Brooks Historical Society Newsletter

January 2021

<http://www.oregonpioneers.com/marion/BrooksHistoricalSociety.htm>

## MISSION STATEMENT

The objective of the Brooks Historical Society and Depot Museum is to educate and stimulate an interest in and knowledge of the history of Brooks, Oregon, and the surrounding areas.

Check out the BHS  
Facebook page.



## “Holiday Sparkles” a Success at Powerland

Nothing says Christmas like a log truck completely covered with Christmas lights!



Brooks Depot Museum and the other museums of Powerland Heritage Park provided an alternate celebration for Christmas, a Christmas drive through event. In spite of rain and cold weather, 751 cars passed through our gate over six evenings to see the museums and vehicles lit up for Christmas. There were many smiles and thanks.

Santa Claus and his helpers handed out

candy canes,, and were a great hit with young and old.

The attendees were very generous, and a check for \$3500 was sent to the Santiam Canyon Wildfire Relief Fund, recognizing all 15 of the museums here at Powerland. Thanks to all the museums and individuals who worked so hard to make this a success! And thank you attendees for your generous donations!

We are planning to do this again next year, and hopefully make it a yearly event.

***Brooks Depot Museum was dressed up in holiday style. See you next year!***



## A Lost Christmas Experience

*By Dan Groah*

Internet shopping dramatically slowed brick and mortar shopping as we approached Christmas 2020. And COVID-19 further eroded actually shopping in stores. Retailers had to adapt or quit. Something was lost in this new age. And that something was part of the experience of holiday shopping.

Granted, the big box stores still retain a remnant of the former Christmas season with some decorations, a bell ringer at the entrance maybe even a Santa Claus. But when the stand-alone department stores closed or became one more store in a sprawling shopping mall, some of the holiday shopping experience went away.



***Pennys in Salem in 1965***

Before malls there were stand-alone department stores. There was Pennys and Montgomery Ward. At the corner of Capitol and Marion streets was Sears. And downtown was Meier and Frank. These were stores that had outside display windows. Of course, these windows were used all year to display products (mostly clothing). However, the windows held a special magic during the holidays. They glistened with Christmas colors with a white wintry background. Merchandise was displayed in an accent of green and red ribbons and bows and silvery tinsel. Future presents were mounted to move. Mannikins with

winter ware rotated. In a toy window, electric trains circled dolls and dinosaurs while a suspended Santa and sleigh flew above it all. Remember Ralphie seeing the BB gun in the 1939 store window in the movie "The Christmas Story" and you have a perfect picture of all this.



***The clock inside Meier and Frank 1955***

As you entered Meier and Frank through the High Street doors, there was more music, green and red decorations were everywhere and sales staff dressed in holiday costumes sold holiday temptations in various departments. Annibel Hermle led the foundation department (how many young people know what was sold in that department)? Annibel later left Meier and Frank to become Annibel Prantle and to live among us as an author of local history such as "Gold on the Pudding." Which was a success because it is out of print and a lot of us missed having a copy under our Christmas Tree.

On the mezzanine level of the Salem Meier and Frank was a huge room with a lot of

holiday decorations. There were tables covered with wrapping paper, ribbons and bows. More displays offered Christmas tree ornaments, lights and tinsel. On one side of the room were indoor and outdoor decorative lights, garlands and holiday displays. And throughout this floor and the whole store could be heard strains of “Jingle Bells” and “Frosty the Snowman” from speakers mounted seemingly everywhere.

Of course I experienced all this in the 1950s and 1960s when I was a lot younger. Even then I knew that all this planned holiday extravaganza was designed to sell. But Gerry Frank and other store managers knew how to make buying a lot of fun.

*Annibel Prantle source: “Marion County History Volume XV”  
Reminiscences of a Salesgirl Page 133*



## 2021 Dues are Due

Thank you all for your past support of Brooks Historical Society. Your dues and support are especially important to us this year since all our usual events at Powerland were cancelled in 2020. So, we have been unable to fund raise in our usual manner.

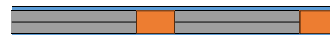
The dues amounts for members, families and businesses are listed on the back of this newsletter. Please submit to the PO Box given, and include a donation if you are able. Any amount would be most appreciated.



## Brooks Historical Society Celebration Day - Saturday, June 19, 2021

On June 19, 2021 we plan to present “*The Aftermath of the Great Willamette Flood of 1861*” which had been planned for our June celebration in 2020. We hope conditions are favorable for a Spring re-opening.

Through history portrayals and readings from a biographical book of the time, we will bring to life what it was like to live through this historic flood, and the difficulties of recovery from such an event. The Saturday event will run from 10 am to 3 pm and include a (potluck?) lunch and a book signing. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for up to date information.



## Brooks Historical Society Celebration Day - Saturday, June 18, 2022

The *Gervais High School Reunion - 100 Years of Gervais High School* event is planned for Saturday, June 18, 2022 at Powerland Heritage Park. All current and former teachers, and alumni of all ages are invited to join the festivities. Notify the planning group through [jjames@oregonsbest.com](mailto:jjames@oregonsbest.com) to make sure you are on their email/contact list.



## Results of the Annual Meeting

Brooks Historical Society met at the Brooks Masonic Lodge on November 7 at 10 am for a short, socially distanced meeting. The bylaws were changed to allow board members to serve multiple terms. The current officers and board members were re-elected.

**Brooks Historical Society**

1 (503) 390-0698

3995 Brooklake Rd. NE  
Brooks, OR 97303

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 9265  
Brooks, OR 97305



**Brooks Historical Society**

**Membership**

- Adult Member ----- \$15.00
- Student Membership ----- \$ 5.00  
(Elementary and High School )
- Business Membership ----- \$35.00
- Donation ----- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Address:

City/State/zip:

Phone

E-mail

**Checks should be written to:**

**Brooks Historical Society**

**Mail to:**

**PO Box 9265**

**Brooks, OR 97305**

**Videos, Books, & Research Collections for**

**sale: Visit our website at [http://](http://www.oregonpioneers.com/marion/BrooksHistoricalSociety.htm)**

**[www.oregonpioneers.com/marion/](http://www.oregonpioneers.com/marion/BrooksHistoricalSociety.htm)**

**[BrooksHistoricalSociety.htm](http://www.oregonpioneers.com/marion/BrooksHistoricalSociety.htm)**

**BHS Officers and Board**

President - Frank Cunningham

Vice-President - Dan Groah

Treasurer - Dorene Standish

Recording Secretary - Vicki Cunningham

Correspondence Secretary - Marilyn Barner

Board - Position 1- Louis Sowa

Position 2- Leah Duda

Position 3- Sharon Shelton

Position 4 - Carl Barner

**Meetings**

The Brooks Historical Society meets at the Brooks Depot Museum at 10 am the first Saturday of the month.

**Directions to the museum at Powerland Heritage Park:** From I-5 - take Exit 263 -- go west approx. 1/4 mile to: Powerland Heritage Park, 3995 Brooklake Road, Brooks, OR 97303. We are in Building 6.

**Interested in Powerland Heritage Park?** Visit [antiquepowerland.com](http://antiquepowerland.com)