

# Brooks Historical Society Newsletter

**April 2010 Vol. 2**

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

We gather, preserve and make available material relating to the history of Brooks and neighboring communities having natural, economical and cultural affinity

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## **OPEN HOUSE JUNE 19-20 Saturday & Sunday Welcomes Historical Societies Statewide**

Visitor Registration Fee \$10 includes:  
Gate and Parking  
Antique Trolley Rides  
Museum Tours  
Door Prizes  
Raffles and Drawings  
Lunch

### **Sunday June 20**

Maps available at the Depot Museum for self guided auto tours-including Historic sites, Historic Museums (off site) including the Spruce Goose. Also nearby Historical Cemeteries.

Members of BHS and children under 12 Free.

For your convenience there will be food available for a great discount

Coffee FREE both Sat. and Sun.

Camping Available \$15/night

## **Partner Museums**

In addition to the Antique Powerland Museum Association established to operate the museum site, Powerland presently encompasses 14 additional museums and heritage organizations operating in partnership.

Western Steam Fiends Association

Branch 15- Early Day Gas Engines & Tractors Association

Antique Implement Society

Willow Creek Railroad

Oregon Two Cylinder Club

Northwest Blacksmith Association

Brooks Historical Society

Pacific Northwest Truck Museum

Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society

Oregon Tractor Pullers, Inc

Oregon Fire Service Museum, Memorial & Learning Center

Antique Caterpillar Machinery Museum

Willamette Valley Model Railroad Museum

Northwest Vintage Car & Motorcycle Museum

## Brooks Onion Warehouses in earlier Days: by Gene Sperle Last Ticket Agent at Brooks Depot

Mr. Sperle visited Brooks Train Depot Museum on January 22, 2010. He is moving in with a son in Keizer, leaving his home in Mt Angel, OR.

He talked about the days as ticket Agent in the Depot. Gene explained how the warehouses functioned as well as who he remembered ran or owned each one in those days. Speaking of the 1950s & 1960s the Depot closed in 1960 for the last time.

As Gene remembered the warehouse just south directly behind the Depot was United Brokers run by a man from Carlton Walter



Cole. Next was the Cold Storage, a long building owned and run by Ronald E. Jones and Mr. Hornshoe. Next was a warehouse run by Mr. Hornbach. Gene goes on to say “there was perhaps others and the last in the line was Labish Brokerage, believes it is now known as Curry & Company.

Gene goes on to say that just to the East of the main line of the warehouses to the North, the first building was Dessert Seed, then Les Klampe who later moved to a Lake site known as B & K Prepak, then Spada and next Arlo Pughs’ warehouse.

He remembers that the area was buzzing with trucks and hard working farmers, Our Museum has many photos. Some still need identified. He said that he remembered that the biggest shipment in his time as agent was 25 carloads of onions in one single day. Many of the Brooks area workers worked long cold days to get the onions in those boxcars. *(Other aspects of the history around the Depot was mentioned and I would like to continue Mr. Sperles recollections, as others in the area. by Dorene Isham Standish)*

## Gene Sperle, Freight Agent Southern Pacific Railway Co.

Brooks Depot shipped out celery before World War II and onions after the war, including onions from Dellwood in Yamhill County. George Schmidt, United Brokers and Ronald Jones bought onions over there, brought them to Brooks to ship out. Ronald Jones’s refrigerator plant kept the Yellow Danver onions there all winter, shipped them in April and May, were done by June. Some extra cars went over to Boise where they completed the load with Danver Reds.

There were 600 sacks at 50 pounds each per car. Brooks station was the largest shipper in this area of fresh produce. (Woodburn station shipped frozen goods from Birdseye.) Many of the shipments went to the Ft. Lewis Army barracks. In 1952, a peak shipping year, they shipped a lot of freight cars to Chicago. There was a staff of two. Freight Agent Sperle worked 7a.m. to 3 p.m.; the clerk worked 2 to 11 p.m. During the war the station was open 24 hours.

The station was closed down during the depression until the mid 30s. There was no passenger service after sometime in the 1930s. Clyde Phillips was the Agent at Brooks at that time [1928-1945]. They started shipping celery in 1928 [411 cars] [In 1938, 400 cars of celery and 900 cars of onions were shipped].

In 1951 fifty-three steam engines were still in freight service. Centralized traffic control came about 1955 with diesel engines, especially for passenger service. There was still occasionally a steam freight engine. They had to use a “helper” over the Aurora Hill, also over the mountains. Daily trains included the Cascade, Daylight, Klamath, Shasta, and Rogue. They stopped at Woodburn, but not at Gervais or Brooks.

The Shasta Daylight, going south caught the mail bag at 60 m.p.h. from the hanger. At the same time the train clerk kicked off the Brooks bag of mail. On the rare occasion the bag hit something and bounced back under the train, there was mutilated mail strewn clear down to Lake Labish, even Chemawa. It was a jigsaw

puzzle matching the pieces of mail. Those expecting government checks were especially stressed; it took months to get them reissued.

Gene came in the Fall of 1950 from Hillsboro. There was a lady agent during the war. D. Ethridge was the agent before Sperle. Gene left Brooks in 1953 to work in Lyons, came back in 1958 and stayed until May of 1960 when the freight depot was closed (except for shipping during the onion seasons in 1961, '62, and '63). George Shell was the "track walker" rode the hand car.

*To be Continued*

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—Happy Birthday—

**-Phyllis Rattray turns 90, Congratulations Phyllis.**

A Birthday party was held at the Beilkie Farm for Phyllis and her twin brother Phillip. Phyllis is a long time member of Brooks Historical and is credited for our railroad tracks that we use on many mailings including the News Letter, Keeping the Tracks alive and Well.

THANK YOU PHYLLIS

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**February 24, 2010 Kathryn McClaughry Passes on ,**

She was a valued member of Brooks Historical Society, and she is missed Other local deaths include:

Robbie Williams passed March 19, 2010  
Jimmie Bacon passed March 22, 2010



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**Get Well Wishes**

Adele Egan is recuperating from another hip replacement.

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**New Member**

Welcome Terry Cuff

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**Remember our ANNUAL SILENT AUCTION**

Reminder-Some members have not paid 2010 dues  
Just a Gentle Reminder::

## 2010 Calendar of Events

**APRIL 24 SAT.** FOLLOW UP TO FEB. 20TH MODEL T CLASS

**MAY 14,15,16 FRI, SAT, SUN** BOY SCOUTS CAMPORALL

**MAY 22 SAT.** VINTAGE CAR GROUP LG. GROUP APMA

**JUNE 5 SAT.** 7TH ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL SHOW & SHINE WEB CONTACT DAN JUDY 503-362-5830

**June 6** SLANT 6 MEET APMA

**JUNE 19-20 SAT, SUN** OPEN HOUSE, BROOKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND DEPOT MUSEUM

**JUNE 25, 26, 27 FRI, SAT, SUN** BRANCH 15 APMA

**JUNE 26 SAT** JOHN DEERE AUCTION

**JUNE 26 SAT.** ORPHAN CAR SHOW AT CAR MUSEUM

**JUNE 12-18** TROLLEY CAMP KIDS TROLLEY

JUNE CAR OPEN HOUSE

**July 11 Sun** CAR SWAP MEET 8AM \$5.00, CONTACT DON PETERSON 503-246-6939 – 503-708-3698

**July 16, 17, 18 Fri, Sat, Sun** INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER

**July 24, 25, 31 AUG 1** STEAM-UP

**Aug 28 Sat.** TRUCK SHOW

**Aug 29 Sun.** DEZOTELL CHURCH PICNIC PRIVATE

**Sept. 5 Sun** EXTREME EDITION CAR SHOW

**Oct.** MOTORCYCLE PRESENTATION

**Brooks Historical Society**

1 (503) 390-0698

3995 Brooklake Rd. NE  
Brooks, OR 97303

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 9265  
Brooks, OR 97305



**MISSION STATEMENT**

The objective of the Brooks Historical Society and Depot Museum is to be educational, to stimulate an interest in, and a knowledge of, the history of Brooks, Oregon, and the surrounding area.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Adult Member ----- \$12.00

Student Membership ----- \$ 5.00

(Elementary and High School )

Business Membership ----- \$30.00

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**

**OFFICERS and BOARD**

President - Larry Leek

Vice-President - Louis Sowa

Treasurer - June Smith

Recording Secretary - Dorene Standish

Correspondence Secretary - Texie Lou Price

Board - Position 1 - Bob Brown

Position 2- Ray Smith

Position 3 - Frank Cunningham

Position 4 - Dean Cuff

**MEETINGS**

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

Directions to the museum at Antique Powerland:  
From I-5 - take Exit 263 -- go west approx. 1/4 mile to: Antique Powerland 3995 Brooklake Road, Brooks, OR 97303