

Brooks Historical Society Newsletter

January 2018, Volume I

<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.



The Caboose is Here! Welcome CBQ #14411

The Society welcomed their circa 1910 CBQ waycar (caboose) as it was settled into place on specially prepared tracks east of the Brooks Depot Museum at Powerland Heritage Park on October 17, 2017. The waycar is planned to serve as a society meeting room, office and storage room. This will clear room in the historic depot for future renovations to bring the depot back to more nearly to as it was when it was a working train depot.

The waycar began its working life for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy (CBQ) Railroad in the Midwest. When CB & Q merged with Burlington Northern, in 1970, the car was brought west. In 1975, Burlington Northern sold it with several other cars to the Oregon Pacific and Eastern Railway (OP&E). OP&E, a now defunct logging and excursion railroad out of Cottage Grove, Oregon, did not keep it long. About 40 years ago (1977, approximately) it was sold again to private owners south and west of Eugene, Oregon. There it and an old S&P caboose were used as lodging for workers on the property. See our website and Facebook page for more information



Celebration Day 2018 Will Honor "Historic Gervais"

Plans are already underway for our Brooks Historical Celebration Day, June 16 from 10 to 3 pm. We will focus on the City of Gervais, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary. Join us for a planning day on January 18 at 10 am at the museum.

We have invited high school students in the area to participate in an essay contest for the event. On our celebration day, the \$100 first prize will be awarded. Other activities include presentations, slide shows, exhibits and music.

We would also like to include information about more recent Hispanic and Russian settlers. If you have some information to share, please contact Vicki Cunningham at 503-390-6697.

Brooks Historical Society Membership

Adult Member ----- \$15.00
Student Membership ----- \$ 5.00
(Elementary and High School)
Business Membership ----- \$35.00
Donation ----- \$_____
(Donors eligible for Oregon's cultural trust tax credit. See culturaltrust.org for details)

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://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 - Gary Clement

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

Interested in Powerland Heritage Park?

Visit powerlandheritagepark.com

The Fate of Charles H. Meithof *by Dan Groah*

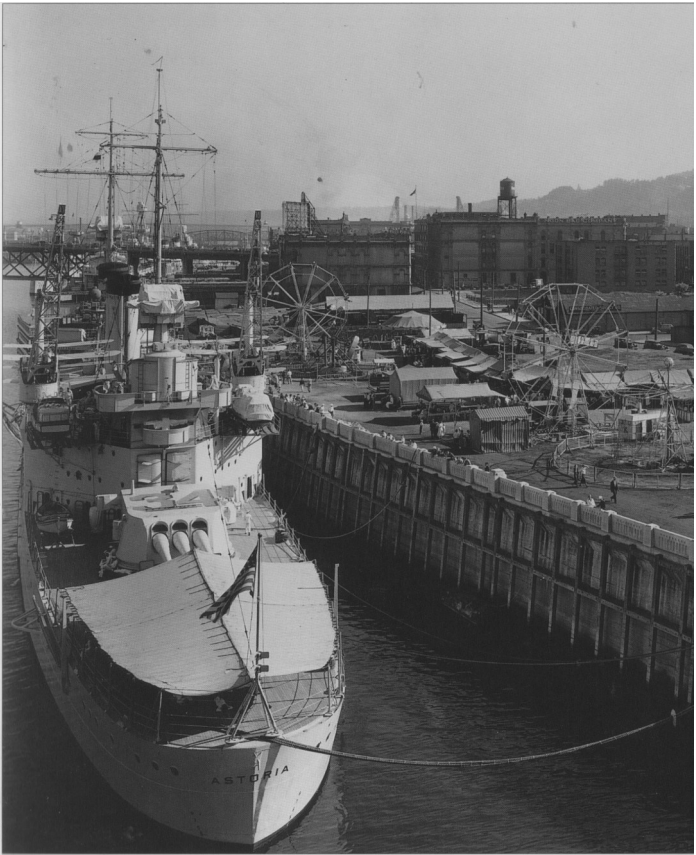
The Brooks Historical Museum is a place of many artifacts and documents. Many of these are grouped in sections. There are sections for local historical agriculture, Japanese-Americans, French Prairie settlers and a section for Brooks area people who served in World War II.

Many photographs and documents are displayed in the World War II section. They honor those who served and came home after the war. However, not all of those that went to war returned. One such person was Charles H. Meithof.

One can only wonder how Charles felt about going to war after the events at Pearl Harbor. Many couldn't wait to enlist. Others were drafted into service with reluctance remembering World War I. However he felt, Charles enlisted in the U.S. Navy.

After boot camp, Charles was trained help run the engines of the huge warships the would challenge the Japanese navy. He found himself assigned as a fireman on the U.S.S. Astoria, a heavy cruiser of the New Orleans class and named after the Oregon coastal town.

In the late summer of 1942 the United States forces challenged Japanese expansion in the Solomon Islands at a place called Guadalcanal. The U.S. Marines landed on Guadalcanal. There were many transport and supply ships offshore to aid the troops ashore. On August 9th, the Japanese navy came to sink these U.S. ships. Defending the U.S. forces was a line of four U.S. cruisers and one Australian cruiser. This turned out to be the battle of Savo Island and the Allied forces committed a series of mishaps the led to an Allied disaster.



The USS Astoria in July, 1937, tied up at the docks in Portland for Fleet Week. Photo by Ray Atkeson.

The Allied cruiser commodore was away consulting with other admirals this night. Early in the day, Australian air patrols had spotted the Japanese forces approaching but their sighting was hours getting through channels. Also, the Australian aircraft identified the Japanese ships as seaplane tenders and not heavily armed cruisers.

Night found the Allied cruiser squadron in a line off Savo island defending the helpless landing support ships. The Japanese approached. Some of the Allied ships had radar. But radar was new and not always accurate and not trusted by many Allied officers.

During the night, a small aircraft was heard flying above the Allied cruisers. It was assumed to be friendly. It wasn't. Near midnight this Japanese aircraft released illumination flares and the Japa-

nese ships fired with eight-inch guns and torpedoes. The Allied forces were surprised.

Some cruiser captains thought they were being fired on by friendly forces. Hits on Allied ships were many. The ships still had their peacetime trim of wooden furniture and painted bulkheads. These readily burned. The cruisers carried spotting aircraft on the sterns and the gasoline tanks ignited further illuminating the ships and presenting easy targets for the Japanese.

The Astoria was able to get some of her guns in action even as she was sinking and gave some hits on a Japanese cruiser. But it was all too late and at 12:15 the Astoria sank taking down with her over 200 of her crew including Charles H. Meithof of Brooks, Oregon.

The way to attack the unarmed U.S. ships off Guadalcanal was open but the Japanese admiral feared Allied aircraft when dawn came, and withdrew back north to safety.



Your Dues are Due!

If you have not already, please pay your dues for 2018 as soon as possible. See the information on the back page regarding your membership dues amounts, and how to remit. Thanks for your support!

The tax deductible portion of your dues qualifies as donation and makes you eligible for the **cultural tax credit**. You can double your gift for free by making a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust and claiming a cultural tax credit on your Oregon income taxes. Donate at culturaltrust.org or by mail.

BHS Discovery Day Jan. 20

BHS will have its first Discovery Day on Saturday, January 20, at 10 am. We will meet at the Depot to carpool to the **B-17 Alliance Museum at the Salem Airport**, 3278 25th St. SE. Or, you can meet us at the airport, at 10:30, main entrance, and park in the Civil Air Patrol parking lot. Call Vicki to RSVP 503-390-6697, so we can arrange a tour.

Room to Remodel

With the promise of office and storage space in the new caboose, plans are being developed to remodel the northeast corner of the Brooks Depot Museum. We want it to more closely resemble what it had been like when it was a working depot. Plans include re-opening the now blocked north door, installing a ticket counter with some display cases built in, and wire mesh coverings over part of the ticket counter openings. The remodel will also shore up a beam over the ticket counter which is sagging. If you would like to help, contact Dorene Standish, 503-393-2053.

Fun at the Park May 19

Look for our BHS table featuring antiques and collectables at this family event. We plan to also have our used book sale ready for this event. Free admission.

BHS and Powerland Heritage Park 2018 Calendar to June

subject to change! The remainder in next issue!

April 7 and 8 - Powerland Opens for the season. BHS open Saturdays 10-2

May 19 Fun at the Park - free admission, a family event

June 16 - Historic Gervais, Brooks Historical Society Celebration, 10-3

June 16 - The Rendezvous - NW Vintage Car and Motorcycle Museum

June 22,23, 24 - Branch 15 Swap Meet

June 24 Oregon Vintage Machinery Museum Annual Auction