

Preserving Forest Grove

Newsletter of the Historic Landmarks Board

100 Years Ago Today

By Claude Romig

Periodically we run a piece describing events that occurred 100 years ago today (give or take a month or two). Some interesting demographical highlights include:

- 100 years ago, more than half of the people in the U.S. were male, under 23 years old, lived in the country and rented their homes. Almost half of all the people in the U.S. lived in households with five or more other people.
- Today, more than half of the people in the U.S. are female, 35 years old or older and live in metropolitan areas where they own their home. Most people in the U.S. now either live alone or in a household with no more than one or two other people.
- 100 years ago children under 5 years old represented the largest five-year age group; but in 2000 the largest groups were 35 to 39 and 40 to 44.
- The percentage of the U.S. population age 65 and over increased in every census from 1900 (4.1 percent) to 1990 (12.6 percent), then declined for the first time in Census 2000 to 12.4 percent.

On April 19, 1906 the San Francisco earthquake left the city in ruins and thousands homeless. The Forest Grove News Times had this to say about the event:

BAY CITY IS IN RUINS

Earthquake Visits San Francisco

THOUSANDS DEAD

Fire Follows Shock and Adds to Panic

NO WATER SUPPLY

Mains are Broken and Firemen Fight Flames With Dynamite—All Business Section Is Gone
City Surely Doomed

“Oakland, April 19.—At 11 o'clock this morning San Francisco is a mass of ruins and the flames continue the work of destruction, obliterating the few remaining habitations. There is no water and the city seems doomed. Dynamite has failed to check the fire. Oakland has been placed under martial law. The San Pablo ferry was sunk by flying debris. All night the heavens were lighted by the light of the vast conflagration. This morning a mass of smoke marks the continuance of the destruction amid scenes of unspeakable horror. The estimated loss in San Francisco will reach from \$150,000 to \$200,000 in the town.

The dreadful earthquake shock came without warning at precisely 5:13 o'clock this morning, its motion apparently being from east to west. At first the upheaval of the earth was gradual, but in a few seconds it increased in intensity. Chimneys began to fall and buildings to crack, tottering on their foundations. People became panic stricken and rushed into the streets, most of them in their

night attire. They were met by showers of falling buildings, bricks, cornices and walls. Many were instantly crushed to death, while others were dreadfully mangled. Those who remained indoors generally escaped with their lives though scores were hit by detached plaster, pictures and articles thrown to the floor by the shock. It is believed that more or less loss was sustained by nearly every family in the city.

The freaks of the earthquake were many. Wide fissures were made in the streets, street railways were twisted out of line, sewers and water pipes were burst, and it is feared that there will be an epidemic of disease. Provisions are being sold at fancy prices, and even water is being vended by the glass."

Closer to home, another disaster set the skies of Forest Grove alight. The News Times reported the event as follows:

HERRICK HALL BURNS—TOTALLY DESTROYED BY FIRE SUNDAY

"March 15, 1906—One of the greatest disasters in the history of Forest Grove occurred last Sunday when Herrick Hall the ladies' dormitory of Pacific University succumbed to the ravages of a fierce fire fanned by a raging wind from the east. With the mercury hovering around 25 degrees and the wind blowing thirty-five miles an hour the firemen worked in vain to allay the calamity while the whole town wrapped in all available materials from rugs and carpets to stray pieces of curtains stood by trying as fruitlessly to keep warm.

Three hours after the alarm was sounded Herrick Hall was reduced to ashes. At 11 o'clock the first alarm was given while most of the occupants were at church and at first only a small blaze resolutely eating away the highest point of the beautiful edifice stood out in defiance to the one little

stream of water which could be utilized. For almost an hour, due to the courageous efforts of the local firemen the fire was kept from gaining on them very fast, which enabled the students and townspeople to carry out almost all the furnishings. All the furniture of the building including four pianos and other valuable pieces were saved although somewhat damaged by rough handling.

The cause is attributed to a spark from a chimney which fell on the roof although it is also stated that a defective chimney was the cause and the fire started from the inside. Both explanations are plausible.

After the firemen gave up the fight it was but a few moments before the building was a solid mass of flames—the roof burning first.

The raging gale carried the sparks and burning embers westward toward the main Marsh Memorial Hall only 100 yards away which was seriously threatened and commanded the attention of the fire company for a considerable time. The dry leaves all over the campus were continually catching afire—as many as seven blazes starting within a radius of 20 feet at one time—which kept the big crowd busy. The large oak trees, the pride of the school and town were several times smoking and blazing.

The Hillsboro Fire Department was called and arrived in the city perhaps none too soon. Already Herrick Hall was a thing of the past but the business section of the town only 200 yards away was catching afire at regular intervals and it is due to the Hillsboro firemen that something more serious did not happen. They succeeded in putting out several small fires and their work cannot be too highly appreciated.

The ladies of the Congregational Church served

Become a Board Member

You've read the newsletter. You've seen the renovation projects. You've admired the new street signs in the Clark District. And you've wondered: how can I be a part of that? The answer is simple: join the Board! We've lots of projects coming up, including additional survey work south of the Clark District, and development of a website. Want to learn more? Come to a meeting! We meet the fourth Tuesday of the month @ 7:00 p.m. in the Community Auditorium conference room. But if you can't wait to join up, please contact James Reitz @ 503/992-3233 for an application. We look forward to hearing from you!

hot coffee to the shivering firemen who were working in this chilling wind with wet clothing. Mrs. Laughlin also appeared on the campus early with a similar purpose.”

As an interesting side note, a second Herrick hall was built. It also burned, on January 2, 1973.

New Grant Funding Available

As most readers know, the Historic Landmarks Board operates a renovation grant program to help property owners offset the cost of doing historically accurate renovation projects. This money is provided by the waste transfer station on the west side of town and is handed out to various groups by the city council. So with each new fiscal year, the HLB gets renewed funding - this year our grant was \$13,500! Have a project that you've been thinking about taking care of on your historic home? Come talk to us. We'll reimburse up to half the cost of the work. Contact James Reitz at 503-992-3233 for more information.

The best way to minimize damage to paper is to store away from four hazards that can shorten papers lifespan: heat, humidity, light and careless handling by people.

Heat speeds chemical reactions and causes paper to decay more quickly. Humidity above seventy percent promotes mold growth. A wide variation in humidity causes paper to expand and contract as water is drawn from and goes back into the paper. Sunlight and fluorescent light can cause chemical reactions which fade and eventually disappear. As paper ages it can easily rip if not handled gently.

Proper storage is the key to preserving paper. Store paper in a cool, dry place, where the humidity stays constant. Uninsulated attics or damp basements are poor places to store paper. Do not expose paper to bright light for extended periods of time. If you are going to display the document, mat it in acid-free material and use glass that filters out ultra violet radiation and hang out of direct sunlight. Do store paper open (not folded) and flat. Fold lines place stress on paper fiber. Further sources of proper storage are:

The Library of Congress Preservation Web: www.loc.gov/preserv/care/paper.html

Washington County Historical Society &

MuseumWeb: Washingtoncountymuseum.org

Phone: 503/645-5353



Herrick Hall was built in 1884 and named after Pacific's second president, Rev. John R. Herrick. Photo Copyright © Pacific University

Preserving Hidden Treasures

By Cindy Kistler

Part of doing work on your home is the chance of finding hidden treasures, such as letters, newspapers, magazines or pictures behind walls or under floor boards. If you're like my husband and me, you're not sure as to how to store and prevent further damage to what you have just found. Hopefully the following can help.

Since the 1860s all but the most expensive paper has been made of wood pulp. Paper made of wood included chemicals that had not been found in paper made in earlier eras. The most damaging chemical introduced was acid. Acid is what causes paper to slowly turn brown and become brittle.

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The Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board Grant Program

Is your house on our local register? If it is, did you know that your house is eligible for restoration / rehabilitation grant funding? The Historic Landmarks Board has funds to help you with your projects. If you are planning any exterior restoration work such as restoring architectural features or if you have structural work to do such a foundation repair, we'd love to help. We fund projects up to 50% of the cost of the job per grant. Come see us! We can also help you find historically appropriate solutions to any problems you may have.

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Preserving Forest Grove is a quarterly newsletter published by the Forest Grove Historic Landmarks Board to help fulfill its duty of public education regarding the preservation of cultural resources. If you would like to be on the mailing list, please call James Reitz at 503-992-3233, or JReitz@ci.forest-grove.or.us.

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