

St. Paul Mission Historical Society (SPMHS)

P.O. Box 158
St. Paul, Oregon 97137
Newsletter – Fall 2025

We hope you enjoy this Fall 2025 edition of the St. Paul Mission Historical Society (SPMHS) newsletter. We welcome your suggestions for future articles. Please feel free to contact any of the Board members with your comments and suggestions.

Mission of the Society:

Preservation of the history of early Oregon and the French Prairie region of the Willamette Valley. Preservation includes establishment of a historical trust for artifacts, written and spoken history of the St. Paul and French Prairie area, and publication of historical records of early Oregon.

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The Annual Meeting:

It will be held on Sunday, October 19, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. at the St. Paul Fire District office located in St. Paul. A light brunch will be provided at no charge. In order to provide an accurate head count, please RSVP to cmarielake@stpaultel.com or call Connie Lenzen at 503-810-4327 and leave a message.

Board members will report on grants and activities this past year.

The speaker is Heather Lagaso, a tombstone restorer. She has been working in several of the local cemeteries cleaning headstones.

Board Elections:

At this time none of the current board members are up for re-election.

If you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors (three-year positions), please contact President Claudine Smith Lake. Her email is cmarielake@stpaultel.com. The Board consists of at least eleven members and no more than nineteen. The term is three years. As a working board, each member chooses an area of interest. The Board usually meets the third Thursday of each month (except October and December) at 11 am at one of the board members home.

Nominations may be made at the meeting for additional board members. We welcome anyone who wants to join the board.

Board of Directors 2024-2025:

Claudine Smith Lake, President
Connie Lenzen, CG, FNGS, Secretary
Donald Koch, Comptroller
Gretchen Brown

Gerry Lenzen, Vice-President
Benda Howard, Treasurer
K'Lyn Brentano
Tim Bergquist, PhD

Board Accomplishments 2024-2025:

- Continued work on inside demo of Brentano House.
- Started the process to replace the porch on the Murphy House.
- Prepared a flyer to advertise the Society and distribute around town.

Board Goals 2025-2026:

- Present a 250th celebration with the focus on William Cannon.
- Accept photos to add to our website collection.

Thanks to the following for their support this past year:

- A donation of \$1,000 from Dave Witter for work on digitizing the William Cannon materials was received. Dave donated \$500 last year.
- St. Paul Fire Department for use of a meeting place.

Joe and Rosella McKay Service Award:

The Society established this Award for outstanding service to the Society. The inaugural awards were made in 2025; after that one per year. A plaque will be placed in the Murphy House. The recipients will have their name added to the plaque as well as receive a certificate acknowledging their contributions at the annual meeting. The awardee for 2025 is **Maureen Ernst**. A detailed biography and picture will be provided in the Spring 2026 newsletter. That newsletter will also have a call for the 2026 nominations.

Murphy House Tour:

Claudine Smith Lake conducts tours of the Murphy House by appointment. She prefers two weeks notice for scheduling purposes. The house is located behind the fire hall in town.

Brentano House Restoration - Getting Down to Bare Walls:

The Restoration has been on Spring and Summer break- work has been slow in the past few months. We continue to need to finish tearing out the inside walls to get down to the stud/board walls. With only a couple rooms left to demo, we will then be looking at electrical work and other permanent upgrades.

Bathroom wiring



Back porch



Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any additional grant money available to us. We will need to rely on individual and family donations.

To donate, please mail a check to St. Paul Mission Historical Society, with THE memo of "BRENTANO HOUSE". A separate checking account has been set up specifically for the Brentano House.

WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY SUPPORT!

Murphy House Update:

A Murphy House Committee has been established. The board has approved a full restoration of the front porch back to the original full-length porch, bottom and top decks (see picture to right). On Wednesday, August 6, Bill Murphy flew out and met K'Lyn Brentano and Chris Ritter (contractor) at the house. Currently the board is working with Chris and Bill to finalize an estimate. Future plans will be to paint the exterior.



Fred Meyers Community Rewards Program:

Apply for a Fred Meyer's Shopper's Card for free and link it to St. Paul Mission Historical Society. Fred Meyer donates annually to participating organizations based on your percentage of spending as it relates to the total spending associated with all participating Fred Meyer Community Rewards organizations.

[Use this link: Fred Meyer Community Rewards Program to get started.](#)

Sign in or create an account, then search for the St. Paul Mission Historical Society in the list of organizations.

America 250-Oregon:

The Society is working with the Oregon state commission on a May 23, 2026 event at the New St. Paul Cemetery at 11:00 am. We are partnering with the Oregon Sons of the American Revolution for the event to celebrate William Cannon, Oregon's only known Revolutionary War veteran, who is buried on the old St. Paul Pioneer Cemetery. Information about Oregon's involvement in the United States 250th Anniversary (Semiquincentennial) celebration can be found at:

<https://www.ohs.org/about-us/america-250-oregon/index.cfm>

Photo Collection Policy:

The historical photo collection directly supports the mission of the Society to preserve the history of Oregon's French Prairie. According to the Oregon Encyclopedia, "French Prairie was historically bounded by the Willamette River to the north and west, the Pudding River to the east, and the remnants of Lake Labish (Lac labiche) to the south and had five major towns: Butteville, Champoeg, St. Paul, St. Louis, and Gervais. Today, the geographical area also includes Woodburn."¹

The primary subject matter of the collection includes historic buildings, individuals, events, geographic areas, as well as the research notes and writings of Harriet D. Munnick.

The collection primarily focuses on materials dating from 1828 - 1950. Exceptions may be considered if the material has significant relevance to the core collection.

Photographs may be acquired through various means, including donation, purchase, or bequests. All potential acquisitions will be evaluated based on their relevance to the Society's scope and focus. Acquisitions will be formally documented by a deed of gift, or receipt in the case of purchase. Accession records will detail the item, its provenance and terms of acquisition.

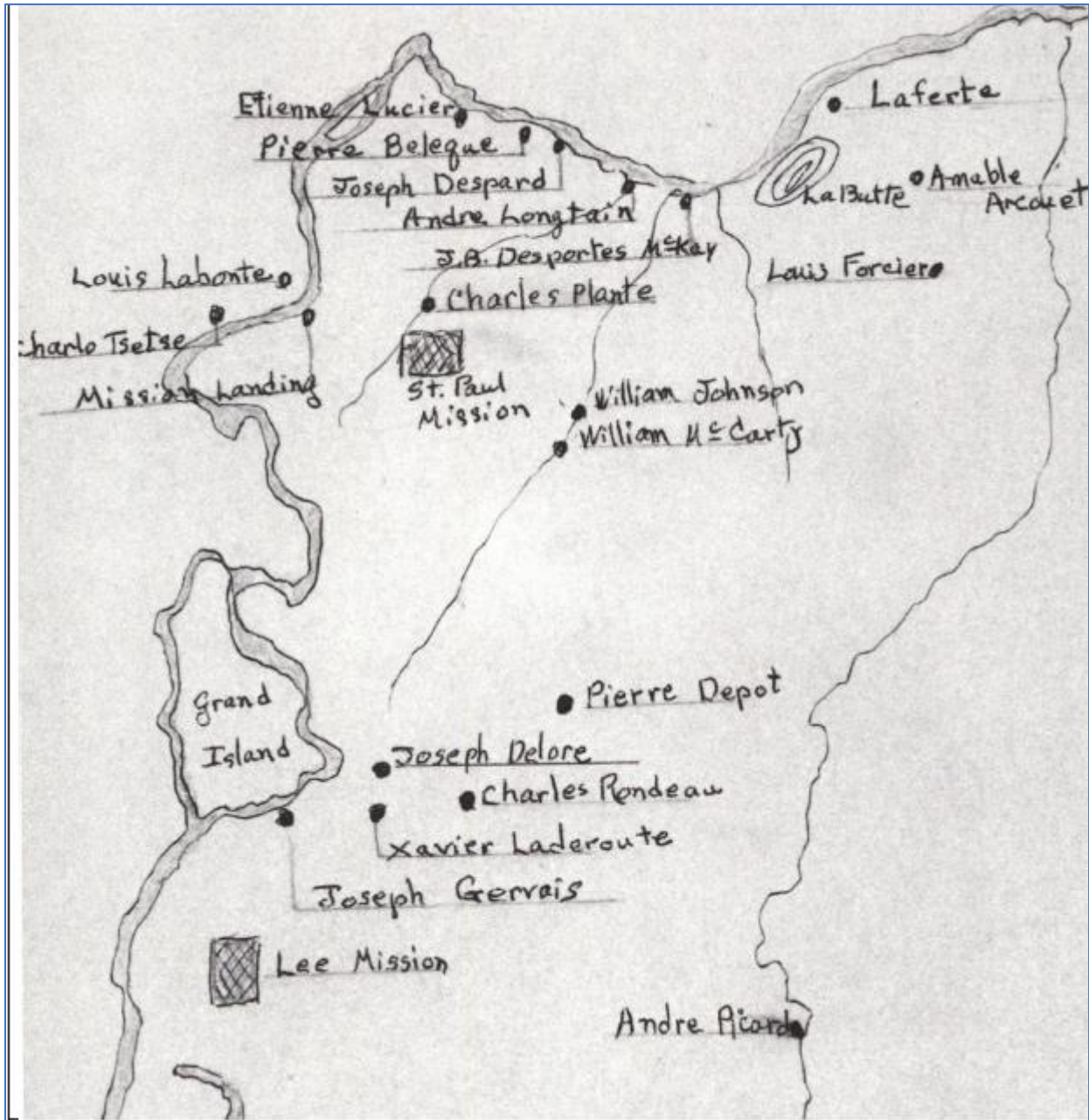
Once a photograph has been approved for inclusion in the collection, it is electronically scanned and provided with comprehensive descriptors, e.g., subject, date of creation, creator, location.

Photographs donated to be included in the database are the property of St. Paul Mission Historical Society. Some photos may also be loaned to the Society for inclusion in the database and returned to the owner after scanning. The owner of the photograph will pay the cost of postage when the photograph is returned.

¹Jette, Melinda. (n.d.) *French Prairie*. The Oregon Encyclopedia.
https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/french_prairie/

French Prairie Settlers Map:

Below is a map from the Society archives showing the location of the first French Canadian settlers homesites. It was created by Harriet Munick as part of her research and writings on French Prairie. It has also been used by Connie Lenzen in her stories about the French-Canadian settlers.



Source: Harriett D. Munnick, *Priest's Progress* (Portland, Ore.: Binford & Mort, 1989), 67.

Dues:

It is time for our annual dues drive. Your dues allow us to continue the work of preserving St. Paul history. Below is a membership application form. Please complete and return it with your annual dues to the address below or bring it to the annual meeting.

If you are a Life Member or Benefactor, please update your membership information so we can keep our files current. Many of our Life Members continue to donate to the Society, and we thank you for your support.

Our sincere thanks to all of our members for supporting St. Paul history. If you would like to contribute to the digitization of historic artifacts and maintenance of our collections, your additional donation would be greatly appreciated. See you on October 19 at 10:30 a.m. at the St. Paul Fire Hall.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

☐ Individual: \$20

☐ Senior: \$15

☐ Family: \$35

☐ Supporting: \$75

☐ Corporate: \$200

☐ Benefactor or Individual Life: \$500

Bring your dues to the Annual Meeting or Send it no later than November 1, 2025 to:
St. Paul Mission Historical Society, P.O. Box 158, St. Paul, OR 97137. Thank you!!

Website: www.spmhs.com.

The website has been updated extensively with lots of new information including stories and articles.

