

St. Paul Mission Historical Society (SPMHS)

P.O. Box 158

St. Paul, Oregon 97137

Newsletter – Fall 2022

We hope you enjoy this Fall 2022 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.

The Annual Meeting of the St. Paul Mission Historical Society:

It will be held on Sunday, October 16, 2022, 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. The speaker will be Carolyn Bowers, Brentano family member, who will present on the Brentano family history and St. Paul.

In addition, complementary copies of the two books, *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest, Vancouver Stella Maris Mission* and *Catholic Church Records of the Pacific Northwest, St Paul*, will be given out to attendees. Plus, there will be a tour of the Murphy House located across from the fire hall after the meeting. In 1852, Matthew O'Connell Murphy built the original three rooms on the riverbank. After the Great Flood of 1861, the house was moved to the St Paul road, and the five rooms in the the front of the house were added. The house was subsequently moved to the SPMHS site.

Elections:

On the agenda will be the Society's annual elections. 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 on the third Thursday of each month (except October and December) at the MarionAg building two miles east of St. Paul.

One Board position is open for re-election in 2022.

Connie Lenzen (Secretary) –

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

2021-2022 Activities:

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

See the next page for updates, accomplishments, and goals.

Board of Directors 2021-2022:

Claudine Smith Lake, President
Connie Lenzen, CG, FNGS, Secretary
Donald Koch, Comptroller
Maurice Smith
Tim Bergquist, PhD

Gerry Lenzen, Vice-President
Benda Howard, Treasurer
Bill McKay (resigned in May)
K'Lyn Brentano
Rev. Scott Baier

Board Accomplishments 2021-2022:

- Returned to face-to-face board meetings.
- Worked on organizing and cleaning the Brentano House contents.
- Received a \$75,000 bequest from the estate of Harold Brentano to restore the Brentano House.
- Received a \$7,000 grant from the Helen E. Austin Pioneer Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation to assist in restoring the Brentano House.
- Began restoration work on the outside of the Brentano House.

Board Goals 2022-2023:

- Upgrade the exterior and interior of the Brentano House, including roof, windows, and doors.
- Apply for grants to upgrade the Murphy House with electricity in every room, and a handicap accessible bathroom (which requires water and sewer).
- Continue upgrading the website to current standards and making the archives more accessible.

Thanks to the following for their support this past year:

- Marion Ag for the meeting room for the board monthly meetings.
- The volunteers who have mowed the Murphy and Brentano house lawns.

In Cooperation:

The SPMHS is working with the newly established non-profit Friends of Historic St. Paul to address the historical aspects of the St. Paul and French Prairie area. The first project undertaken by the new historical group is renovation of the 1914 St. Paul Creamery building, also known as the Columbus Club.

Murphy House Tours: Claudine Lake conducts tours of the Murphy House by appointment. To schedule a future tour of the Murphy House, contact Claudine to set it up.



Brentano House:

The Dr. F. X. Theodore Brentano house was donated by the St. Paul Rodeo Association and moved to the historical society property in 1994. Richard Brentano and United Disposal Service donated \$14,709 for the moving of the house, including the new foundation. In the 1880s, the doctor's house served the St. Paul region as a hospital and doctor's office and the upstairs of the house served as the Brentano family residence. At right is a picture of the Brentano House, ca 1900 (photo from the Archives of the Archdiocese of Portland).



In 2003, the Society received \$10,000 from Angelo and Joan Spada to establish the Brentano House Endowment Fund.

In March 2022, the Society voted to restore the Brentano House as a museum and research center, with meeting space and storage. A Brentano House Subcommittee was formed by the Board and will be directing any restoration work. An estimate for \$82,000 was received by the Society in May 2022 for restoration work on the house. The plan was then approved by the Board.

In July 2022, the Society received a bequest from the estate of Harold Brentano in the amount of \$75,000 to be used solely for the specific purpose of acquiring, maintaining, or improving the Brentano Historical House. There were four stipulations to receive the funds, all of which have been met:

1. All of the duly appointed officers of the St. Paul Mission Historical Society must sign a written Agreement of understanding and Commitment (The Agreement) with the Trustees of the Trust, related to the use of the funds.
2. The Agreement will set forth a plan of action, together with a corresponding time frame and anticipated expenditure budget for the full use of the distribution, mutually agreed upon by the Historical Society and the Trustees.
3. The Agreement will include a Statement from the Historical Society to act in good faith to accomplish the established plan of action with in the agreed upon time frame.
4. A final Agreement between the St. Paul Mission Historical Society and the Trustees must be reached and signed within 8 months of his death (March 4, 2022) or the provision for the distribution shall lapse.

In September 2022, the Society received a grant of \$7,000 from the Helen E. Austin Pioneer Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation. Between the bequest and the grant, the restoration work is now fully funded and work is proceeding at this time. Projects include removing the aluminum siding, replacing and repairing windows to original period, doors, deck repair, painting, and HVAC and electrical installation. Working with Three Rivers Construction and Monitor Millwork, the initial inspections found original pattern siding on the 1870 portion of the house that looked in good shape. The current windows were inspected and determined which original windows could be repaired and which would be replaced.

Starting in July, the aluminum siding was removed, deck boards removed, vinyl windows removed, carpet removed, and window drawings completed. The five original windows in the front of the house have been reconstructed and the remaining windows to be replaced are done. Work needed to complete this phase: Windows are ready to install; original siding will be left and repaired where needed, front deck replaced, back room taken off to make into a back porch, front room flooring scraped to get to original fir flooring, and outside painted.

Additional funding will be needed to start the inside renovation. Proposed upgrades include flooring, inside paint/wall repairs, bathroom remodel, and ADA accessible. Other items may come up as work gets started on the inside repairs.

At right is a picture showing the siding removed and where the front extension was added.



In Remembrance:

Harold Charles Brentano passed away on March 4, 2022 at age 89 while surrounded by family. He was born on July 3, 1932 to Charles and Josephine (Meeuwsen) Brentano in St. Paul, Oregon on the family farm. Harold was a grain and row crop farmer. He farmed alongside his dad and uncle in the early days, then on his own before retiring and keeping a watchful eye on his nephews as they continued to farm the land. He loved animals, always filling the barnyard with goats or cows. Harold loved his hometown and was known as 'Uncle Harold' by many, related or not. He always had a story to tell and a joke to put a smile on your face. Harold was an inventor and rock collector. In his retirement, he was known for his red Toyota pickup and his black labrador, Molly. Harold and Molly could be found walking the gravel bar of the river looking for rocks to polish. He was proud to be a St. Paul Buckaroo, graduating from St. Paul High School in 1951. Harold was a longtime member of the St. Paul Rodeo and volunteered into his 70's as a gateman taking tickets. He was a parishioner of the St. Paul Catholic Church.

A painless way to support the ongoing work of SPMHS.

The Society is now part of Amazon Smile and using the link in the box can increase donations to SPMHS. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases.

Your unique charity link

This link will take people directly to smile.amazon.com in support of your organization so they won't have to search for your charity among almost a million other organizations. Use this link in all your AmazonSmile marketing promotions. It's the easiest way for customers to find and support your charity.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/93-0671244>

Website:

Below is the new home page for the Society. Be sure to check it out.

The screenshot shows the website for the St. Paul Mission Historical Society. The header features the title "ST. PAUL MISSION HISTORICAL SOCIETY - ST. PAUL, OREGON" and the subtitle "Preservation of the history of early Oregon and the French Prairie region of the Willamette Valley". A navigation menu includes links for Home, About, Collections, Stories, Maps, Publications, Membership, and Contacts. The main content area has a "Welcome" section with text about the society's database and Harriet D. Munnick's work. A "Newsletters" section lists dates from October 2011 to October 2021. A large historical photograph of a building is also visible.

The SPMHS is charged with preserving the history of the St. Paul area. Thanks to the Austin Family Fund and the Schwemm Family Fund, thousands of St. Paul images can be accessed online from the SPMHS website, www.spmhs.com. To search these images, select the “Collections” tab and then the “keyword” search tab.

You will find photos, Harriet Munnick’s notecards, family histories, diaries, newspaper clippings, Harriet Munnick’s ceramic collection, and much more.

Treasures from the digital collections



Inside Henry Ernst saloon



St Paul baseball players

Dues:

It is time for our annual membership 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 maintenance of our collections and restoration work on the two houses, your additional donation would be greatly appreciated. See you on October 16 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, 2022 to:
St. Paul Mission Historical Society, P.O. Box 158, St. Paul, OR 97137. Thank you!!



St Paul Catholic Church in 1900 – digital image from SPMHS website.