THE "COMMODORE" OF BUENA VISTA HEIGHTS

Every community has its eccentric character which people talk about long years after they are gone, and the community of Shippington or Buena Vista Addition can boast of a most unusual character in the person of "Commodore" Alex Nosler. Whether he ever obtained the title of Commodore or even Captain as he was more casually known, has not been ascertained for certain but we do know he much preferred the title of Commodore Nosler.

The home which he built about 1908 was situated on a high point in the Buena Vista heights area. The only house above the swamp area then. The site now is just a level acreage on the upper end of Pitt Street. Residents of the neighborhood say some wild yellow roses still bloom about the edges and these are probably descendants of some roses gracing a well-tended garden.

This 75' x 46' structure to which he gave the title St. Cloud, was built to take advantage of the wonderful view of mountains and lake to the west. It featured two tower-like sections on either side of the front door. The windows, some say, were strung with fine wire so as to make music when the winds from the lake blew in. A locked gate and barbed wire fencing kept out the curious and uninvited. However, to the bafflement of those who watched this home go up, no effort seemed to have been made to provide well water or piped in water for household or garden needs and many recall seeing the "Commodore" in his brass-buttoned suit, hauling buckets of water up from a source below the hill to keep his roses and potato patch in good condition.

The man had apparently earned his wealth as an expert boat-
builder and wood-worker. As a hobby, he had a passion for carving life-size figures of wood. Vera Frain Hutchinson, who in early years had an opportunity to see the display of his work in his self-styled museum, recalls that near the entrance he had constructed a stage that moved across the room carrying the figures of his mannequins which also had some movable parts. The curiosity of the townspeople brought a constant stream of visitors and he finally decided to capitalize on this curiosity by erecting a front entrance gate to the house with a sign announcing admission price 10¢ was now required. That seems not to have discouraged the curious too much.

The local news contributor for the Evening Herald never lacked for interesting tid-bits to round out less exciting community happenings for the Shippington area. Note this item in the Oct. 28, 1913 issue concerning a run in by the "Commodore" and some neighborhood mongrel. He expressed himself thusly: "I have been bitten twice today by some low-born, pusillanimous, bugle-eyed, pot-licking dog. These dogs may be favorites to someone, but I'm something of a favorite too in my own home".

Some may have joked about the strange man and his strange mansion on the hill but no one could deny that he was also a great blessing to the community in that a "touch of class" was added to the social life of the section by the invitational dances, parties and balls held quite regularly at St. Cloud.

We get a bit of appreciation of this fact from reading the many reports of these events in the local happenings section of The Herald through the years of 1909 to the early twenties. For example this item..."St. Cloud, the wonderful home of Commodore Alex Nosler on Buena Vista Heights will be visited by a large party of young people... for a dancing party..."

Sometimes the reporter waxed more eloquent as on July 24, 1913 following a more formal affair..."From the opening strains of the Marguerite March, written especially for this occasion, until the close of the Dream Waltz, the affair was a chain of elegance and beauty".

The dance parties or balls were strictly by invitation and rules were rigidly enforced. There was absolutely no drinking or
smoking permitted. But sometimes, such as one particular Halloween Eve, some youngsters, not invited, decided to have a little fun, by-pass the locked gate and tie shut the front door of the house to the consternation of those expecting to leave later. It seemed however, the youngsters ended by being caught red-handed when one of the group tied an end to the gong knob instead of the door knob, and the reporter summed it up by saying, "And you know what that gong sounded like!" There must have been quite a spacious parlor for entertainment as many as one hundred would receive invitations to the dance-party at one time. On one occasion ...fifty-five dancers whirled in time to the enchanting strains of Professor Gould's string band".

But all was not dancing and frivolity. In November of 1909 we note that the intellectuals of the community were encouraged to attend a Literary Society meeting at the home of Alex Nosler. So we know that in those early years, much of the community cultural life depended upon this strange little man. One reporter summed it up very well in one sentence. "The people of Shippington are having a lively time between parties, Sunday School, Literary Society and etc. and the old Sailor Bachelor is kept busy scrubbing his decks as it is mainly there the business is done".

Nosler did carry on his boat-building trade while here and in 1905 he built a huge houseboat for I.A. Duffy. This houseboat was about as strange as the builder since it measured 65 feet long by 20 feet wide but lacked any means of self-propulsion. It had towing problems and finally became a sort of floating hotel for duck hunters on Agency Lake.

He seemed to have left the area in the early twenties to go to the Medford vicinity. Some residents of the Buena Vista section of town believe the house burned in the late twenties, but the stories still linger as do a few odd trees (scrub locusts perhaps) growing at the site of that one and only "St. Cloud" mansion.

researched and written by
Janis Kafton.
In subsequent interviews memories were shared.
JACK LINMAN REMEMBERS "SAINT CLOUD".

As a boy 9 or 10 years old living in the Shippington area, Jack went with his parents to the dances given by Captain Nosler. He recalls the many gables, bay windows and scroll work on the "castle". Whenever the Captain took the notion he would add a wing or a bay window to it, it seemed.

When there was an occasion for a parade down town he wore a long navy coat which he said was the result of him having served in the Argentine Navy. But he had decorated it with some stars which he cut from bright Kerosene cans.

Captain Nosler was somewhat gifted in that he could do remarkable things with very few tools. Skilled mechanics marveled at what he could do with so few tools. He would carve a bird or an emblem for almost anyone who asked him. Many people ask him to carve something as a decoration for their boat.

"However the life size figures of people, mainly women standing there in their elaborate dresses looked very real. And the piano of course was remarkable. It astonished a lot of people. He named his piano "The Golden Lyre". Captain Nosler used a lot of color, especially blue which seemed to be his favorite", Jack remembered.

CLARENCE BELL REMEMBERS "THE TURTLES"

"They were about a foot and a half across, mounted on wheels so they could move but when they moved, the neck and legs also moved just like a turtle walking. They were painted a "turtle brown color" with diamond squares on their backs. They were so large we kids could ride on them".

The stage had purple drapes across it and many of the mannequin figures were dressed in blue or gold dresses.

Captain Nosler built and carved his own casket which was placed inside another wooden box with a lid. It was stored inside the house.
The windows of the house had shutters, probably to keep out the sun, and when they were loose and the wind blew, it was very spooky. After the Captain had seemingly deserted his unlocked castle and didn't return, the kids would play inside and ride the turtles until the shutters banged. Then they ran shrieking from the house and down the hill.

**JOHN McANDREW RECALLED:**

The house stood on the top of the hill with nothing else around it. The "Commodore" would invite the young people in to dance. It was just a nice Sunday afternoon walk from town out there and groups of young people would do that and have picnics on the grounds.

**THE ELLIOTT GIRLS REMEMBER**

Dortha Elliott Hawthorne and Nelle Elliott Motschenbacher recalled Commander Nosler as being a very friendly sort of fellow who liked to have people come visit him. He had this great big two story house with a picket fence around it and a great big swing out in front. He called it Saint Cloud.

He evidently had some seamanship and had pictures of ships and things in the house and he carved things out of wood. He had a bookcase and when you went over to look at it all the books were carved out of wood. He lived in the back of that house and he was in the heighth of his glory when people came to St. Cloud. He used to have dances there.

It was quite the thing when young ladies and men went courting on Sunday to walk out to St. Cloud.

Bob Elliott was impressed by the stage Commander Nosler had in the house and remembered it. Bob also remembered when the house burned but couldn't recall the exact year.

*Interviews by Mae L. Smith*
KLAMATH REPUBLICAN
Klamath Falls, Klamath County, Oregon.....October 19, 1905
Greatest Building Boom
In History of the Town
Nearly a Quarter Million Dollars Have Been Spent
In Klamath Falls During the Summer for New
Buildings Alone - Many More Contemplated

Ninety new buildings at an estimated cost of $225,000, or an
average of over $200, for every man, woman and child in the city,
is the record of building improvements during the past summer,
that the little town of Klamath Falls can present to the world.

The carpenters, masons and bricklayers have been busy from day-
light until dark in Klamath Falls this summer, buildings have been
going up on all sides, the number only limited by the lack of
material and workmen. A list of the new buildings has been comp-
iled, which is as near correct as possible, but no doubt some have
been omitted. Many new structures were built last fall and in
fact nearly every business house in the city was enlarged and the
stock increased to supply the demand. Many more buildings are
contemplated. Plans have already been submitted for some, which
will be commenced during the winter or the first thing in the
spring. It is expected that 8 or 10 brick and stone business
houses will be built during the early part of next year. This
article however, has nothing to do with prospective buildings but
with improvements that have actually been made this summer.
Following is the list as has been compiled:

Brick and Stone

Klamath High School building: Will be completed January 1st.
Cost $32,000. Basement and 3 floors. The building is constructed
of brick and the roof covered with metal shingles. The entire
basement is of concrete.

Klamath Falls Public School: In course of construction. Cost
$20,000. Basement and 3 stories. The basement is built of native
rock and the walls of sandstone.

The third most important building being constructed in the city
is the 4 story brick being built by George T. Baldwin, the
hardware merchant. This is located on Main St. one block east of
the bridge. It is the largest building in Klamath Falls and is
estimated to cost between $15,000 and $20,000. It has a 65 foot
front and is 80 feet deep with 4 stories. The entire building is
constructed of Klamath County brick.

Chas. E. Worden has 2 brick buildings in course of construction
on Main St. between 4th and 5th. They are on opposite sides of
the street. They are on opposite sides of the street. They are
both 2 story business houses with office rooms on the 2nd floor.
The cost of the 2 will be $9,000.

Fred Melhase is having the finishing work done on his 2 story
building on the east corner of Main and 2nd St. The building is
30 x 50 feet and will cost $5,000. It will be occupied by Meiss &
Armand Meat Market, and the Library and offices will be on the 2nd
floor.

Frame Buildings

The Klamath Lake Navigation Company are spending $30,000 in new
buildings and improvements in this city. The new steamer Klamath
which was built at the company's dock, cost between $15,000 and
$20,000. The Company have their dock completed which is 60 feet
wide by 235 feet long. Their old office is being moved and a mod-
ern 3 story building 40 x 80 is being erected in its place. The
new 2 story office building is about completed and also their 60 x
80 warehouse. Besides their steamer the Navigation Company are
equipped with launches, 2 row boats and 2 large barges which cost
$600. each.

Mrs. E.E. Heidrich, two story business block 40 x 65, Main St.
between 1st and 2nd. street. This building is now occupied by L.
Jacobs & Co., proprietors of the Boston Store.

F.T. Sanderson, two story building 24 x 90, on the east corner
of Main and 7th. General Store and hall.

George Biehn, Palace restaurant, Main St. between 7th and 8th.
Klamath Falls Steam Laundry, D.B. Campbell, proprietor, build-
ing and plant, cost between $6,000 and $7,000....Main St. between
10th and 11th.

R.E. Dyer, Tin and Plumbing Shop, 20 x 40 corner Klamath Avenue
and 7th St.
Dan Gordon, Soda Water Works, 7th St. between Main and Klamath Avenue. Occupied by Epsy and Son.

George Pan Company, 2 story saloon and rooming house, Main St. between 1st and 2nd. Occupied by Log Cabin Saloon.

J.A. Houston, 10 room addition to his Lodging House on west corner of Main and 2nd streets.

Mrs. H.F. Shallcock, addition to the Oregon, 2 stories, 15 rooms. Klamath Avenue and 5th St.

W.W. Pritchett and Son, sash and door factory, corner 11th and Canal streets.

Frank Sellers, saloon building corner 7th and Main streets.

Dr. G.W. Maston, sanitarium and office, Main and 8th streets.

W.B. Barnes, 20 rooms, 2 story addition to the American Hotel, on Main St.

J.E. Sullivan, saloon and rooming house. Main St. between 1st and 2nd occupied by Harry Allen.

Geo. R. Hurn building on Main St. between 5th and 6th, occupied by Mongold and Campbell, barbers.

Catholic Church, on Worden Avenue in Fairview Addition.

R.P. Breitenstein, addition to Farm and Implement Store, Main St.

Chas. Woodard, blacksmith shop, Main St. between 8th and 9th.

Grizzle Bros. marble Works, main St. near 11th.

J.V. Houston, Office building and shooting gallery, Main St. near 2nd.

1905 Building Boom

The following persons have built residences in Fairview Addition: W.J. Wallace, C.M. Adams, A.J. Godfrey, W. Frank Petett, H.J. Miller and Fred Heilbronner.

Chas. Shattuck, residence on 5th St. near High.

Col. V.L. Beebe near High school.

O.B. Gates, modern residence on 5th St. near High in First Addition.

E.C. Smith, 11 room residence corner of 11th and Worden Avenue in Fairview Addition.

Thos. Willsie residence in Shives Addition.

S. Chappel, residence on 10th St. near High.
W.W. Scott, residence corner Pine and 7th streets.
Dr. F.M White, 2 story residence on Pine St. between 4th and 5th.
Silas Obenheim, residence on second lot west of the High School in 1st Addition.
W.H. North, residence near High School in 1st Addition.
K.D. North, residence near High School in 1st Addition.
Dr. Demorest, residence near High School in 1st Addition.
Elmer Applegate, residence corner 1st and Washington streets, Ewauna Heights.
Walter Lennox, residence south corner 1st and Washington streets, occupied by J.O. Williams.
George Chastain, residence south corner 3rd. and High streets in Ewauna Heights.
Mary Swingle, residence corner 9th and High streets.
Will Humphrey, residence Pine St. between 7th and 8th.
F.T. Sanderson, residence on Pine St. between 7th and 8th.
Chas. E. Worden, modern cottage on High St. on Ewauna Heights.
H. Newhan, residence on High St. between 2nd and 3rd.
Annie Hutchinson, cottage on Pine St. near 1st.
M.E. Hutchinson, residence on Pine St. near 1st.
J.E. Sullivan, residence corner Walnut Avenue and 10th Street.
Owen Maguire, residence corner Walnut Avenue and 4th, occupied by A. Ritzenthaler.
A.L. Sherman, residence corner Klamath Avenue and 10th Street.
O.F. North, residence corner 10th and Canal Streets.
C.B. Clendenning, residence Klamath Avenue between 9th and 10th.
J.H. Hamilton, residence corner Klamath Avenue and 9th Street.
Mrs. M.S. Nelson, residence corner of Walnut Avenue and 5th St.
Jasper Bennett, residence Walnut Avenue occupied by E. Rideour.
A.E. Crance, residence corner Walnut Avenue and 6th Street.
Mrs. E. Wakefield, residence Walnut Ave. between 6th and 7th.
W.O. Webb, residence on Klamath Avenue between 4th and 5th.
E.B. Henry, 8 room residence, Klamath Ave. between 4th and 5th.
Fred Biehn dwelling between 7th and 8th on Walnut Avenue.
Bert Hall cottage on Walnut Avenue between 9th and 10th.
H.E. Hansberry, residence, Walnut Avenue between 6th and 7th.
H.W. Keesee, residence on Walnut Avenue between 6th and 7th.
Mrs. Melhase, residence on Walnut Avenue between 6th and 7th.
C.L. Reed, residence corner Klamath Ave. and 2nd St.
Mrs. A.L. Sargent, residence on Main St. near 11th. Occupied
by Neil Campbell.
L. Biehn, residence on Main between 9th and 10th streets.
F.M. Barnum residence on Main near 11th.
M.H. Beebe, residence on Main near 11th.
C.H. Daggett, residence on 3rd Street between Pine and High.
A.K. Santamew, residence North corner 8th St. and Washington.
Bert Childers, residence Jefferson Street near 9th.
Chas. Nelson, residence corner 9th and Washington streets.
Chas. E. Worden, boat house and dock on water front in rear of
Lakeside Inn Hotel.

---Devere Helfrich collection---

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LOCAL AND BUSINESS BRIEFS.
October 19, 1905.

Dr. Geo. H. Merryman, H.J. Winter, the jeweler, and B. St. Geo.
Bishop, the furniture man, arrived Monday evening by stage from a
2 week visit at the Lewis and Clark Fair at Portland.

The Reclamation Service expects to finish within the next 2
weeks, the securing of options for rights-of-way for the main east
side canal as far as Merrill. Where options are not obtained
right-of-way will be secured by condemnation.

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BEST EQUIPPED HOTEL IN SOUTHERN OREGON
LAKESIDE INN
Mrs. M. McMillan, prop's.
73 rooms and suites---sample rooms, Bar room, Parlor, 2 club rooms etc. etc.

Special Resort for Tourists.

***************

THE LODGE
J.H. Rice, Prop.
Pelican Bay, Oregon

Now open for business. The Best of Fly Fishing and Hunting Boats for the Angler. Give me a call.

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A BIT OF NOSTALGIA: A last chance to view the one remaining two-story house, moved from Main Street to make room for the building of the Winema (Elk) Hotel, which was started in February 1930.

Two houses were moved to Pine Street near Esplanade at that time but last fall one was demolished and this one will be torn down this spring, so I was told. When it is gone another piece of Klamath's past will be only a memory.
STORING YOUR ANTIQUES AND KEEPSAKES AT HOME

Place linens flat if possible or at least with as few folds as possible.

If textiles are to be stored a long time, they don't need to be ironed. Every time a textile is ironed, it is minutely damaged by the heat.

An alternative to pressing is to lay the material on a flat surface to day.

Use no starch when storing, insects love to eat the cellulose.

Delicate fabrics can be sandwiched between polyester window screen (not wire) and basted in for a delicate washing or pressing.

Textiles should be stored in darkness.

Quilts should be refolded often to reduce stress on the same area (4 times a year). If possible cover long cardboard tubes with aluminum foil and then cover it with a strip of old cotton sheet stitched over it by hand. Old quilts are then rolled over the covered tubes. The quilts are protected from the acids in the cardboard in this way.

Don't wrap silverware in newsprint. The paper is acidic and the ink is a chemical. It will etch the silver and it can't be removed. Tissue paper from Woolworth's is the least acidic and good to wrap with. Use white tissue paper only.

-----------Pat McMillan-----------

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