

MRS. MARTHA FORD

Interview by Cliff Crawford at her home on the Washougal River

Cliff: Hello Mrs. Ford, you remember me?

Martha: Oh yeah. Well what are you . . .

Cliff: Well, I wanted to ask you some questions, if you could tell me. Gee, this is a beautiful cactus bed here, isn't it? Got an awful lot of cactus there. Some orange ones growing here too, huh?

Martha: Yeah.

Cliff: First of all, I wanted to ask you this . . .

Martha: Where did you get that?

Cliff: At the museum, it says on the thing, ask Martha Ford about picture. We wanted to know if you could give us the information on who they are or anything about them.

Martha: Well, that's James Knox Polk Jones and his wife.

Cliff: Well, where was this taken at?

Martha: Up here in the mountains. About the headquarters of the Little Washougal. Right at the head waters of the Little Washougal.

Cliff: Oh, up by Jones Creek?

Martha: Well, that's Jones, Charlie Jones' parents. Ever heard of Charlie Jones?

Cliff: I don't think so. But, well, this is the Jones here then the Jones Creek was named after them, huh?

Martha: That's right, they are the father and mother of Charlie Jones who lived there quite a while afterwards. We used to go up and pick blackberries up in there, those little creeping blackberries. That was taken up at Meadow Creek, near Twin Buttes. Just before you get to Twin Buttes, ah, the Indians were allowed to pick them on the right hand side of the road but they were camped at the left hand side. This camp was on the left hand side. There were a couple of

Tee Pee's there and this moonlight picture, I've chemically treated it blue afterwards.

Cliff: Oh, so it looked like moonlight, huh?

Martha: Yeah, well I took that, it was just a Kodak picture, there was another Tee Pee nearby and on the original picture I have both Tee Pees but when I chemically changed this blue, I just enlarged the one Tee Pee.

Cliff: Well, that's beautiful, isn't it?

Martha: Yeah I think so.

Cliff: We had it in the drawer in the museum and Sharon and I were going through the photographs and we came across these two and this note was on them. One said moonlight and one said Tennesseians and, of course . . .

Martha: Well, I didn't give, is that the Skamania County?

Cliff: Yeah, uh huh.

Martha: I don't remember, I lent those to Mr. Sams.

Cliff: Mr. Sams?

Martha: Yeah, and I hadn't seen them for a long time. Of course, I don't look into that drawer where those people pictures are very often. But anyway, I lent Mr. Sams them and also the Fishwheel. Well, Ivan Donaldson was interested in the Fishwheel and he gave it back to me but these two I didn't get back.

Cliff: Oh, is that right? Well then I'll give them back to you. But you say the reason that I was particularly interested in these is so many pictures come in to the museum with no writing on them at all and they don't mean anything at all unless . . .

Martha: Well, these aren't supposed to be in the museum. I think Archie Sams, I don't remember giving them to him. I let him take them. My postcard album there

Cliff: What I think you should do is to write on the back of the picture here the particulars on these before that information is lost. Like on this one, write both the names, the full name on the back and where it was taken.

Martha: Yeah, this was written because of the exhibit I made with those. I don't believe I remember your name.

Cliff: Cliff Crawford.

Martha: Cliff Crawford, oh yes. I knew your face, recognized your face but I couldn't

Cliff: Yeah, you were up at the presentation that I had the other night.

Martha: Yeah, well, I enjoyed that very, very much. That's why I remembered your face, I guess.

Cliff: But you should get the information on the backs of them anyway for future people.

Martha: Yeah, well this one would be in Klickitat County though, up there at Twin Buttes.

Cliff: Well, let's see, is Twin Buttes in Skamania County or Klickitat. I think that Twin Buttes and Surprise Lakes and _____ Creek are all in Skamania County. That would be, of course, would be a Tee Pee that was taken in the huckleberry fields.

Martha: It was taken up there and this is Twin Buttes up here, you see. Well, this is in Clark County, here so that wouldn't be of interest to you, I would rather give this to the museum in Clark County, in Vancouver.

Cliff: Well, even if you hold off a little bit, I understand that they are going to get a little museum in Washougal.

Martha: Well, they're working at it but I'm very much interested in the other one.

Cliff: Oh, in Vancouver?

Martha: In Vancouver, yes. I've been a board member there for years.

Cliff: This would really be a real good historical picture in the fact that it was Jones Creek and Jones was named after these people.

Martha: Oh yes, well, they got back to, as far as the museum but didn't get back to me.

Cliff: I see, well that's fine. What, let's see if there's any other information I can ask you.

Martha: Yeah, I'm close to Skamania County and Troutdale so I'm interested in

Skamania County, of course, and I go up to the meetings there but . . .

Cliff: How long have you lived here?

Martha: It will be 86 years next week.

Cliff: Then you were born here then.

Martha: I was born on this place.

Cliff: Right here?

Martha: Up on the hill.

Cliff: Gee, that's great. Oh, the place across the road is yours, too, isn't it?

Martha: Yeah, 80 acres in there.

Cliff: Oh, up on the hill right where the fruit trees are on the top, there?

Martha: Yeah, it would be just beyond everything, a cleared acre there when my folks bought the place, just one acre was cleared.

Cliff: And your folks, how long were they here before you?

Martha: Oh, a year and a half or so. Yeah, they left Germany on their wedding day and came across.

Cliff: Well, I see in the Skamania Museum, there are some cards. Are those your cards?

Martha: Yes, that's what I mentioned to you about the postcard album that . . .

Cliff: Yeah, there is a German woman by the name of Kloninger from Washougal.

Martha: Uh huh, that was my mother.

Cliff: Oh, is that right? Oh, alright. Well, I was trying to reach some of them yesterday. I went through the entire album. Course, as you can probably guess, I spend 90% of my time looking for old pictures.

Martha: I see. Well, I have an idea some of those old ones were taken out. I think Archie took part of them out.

Cliff: Yeah, well there wasn't too awful many of them missing but looking at the

post cards, they were written somewhere in 1909, or 1911.

Martha: Oh yes, earlier than that, even.

Cliff: They were written in German.

Martha: Many of them. My mother and I always spoke to each other in German to the very end.

Cliff: Well, that's kind of nice, I think that people that have it . . .

Martha: It was just perfectly natural, too. I don't know, people could have been around us and everything and to my mother I speaked German. Not that she needed to have the German language but . . .

Cliff: It's very nice to keep up on it

Martha: Well, I'm very thankful that I did. Of course, I studied it to teach it and came here to teach it just before the first World War broke out and then, of course, that killed the profession, absolutely.

Cliff: Well, until afterwards and then . . .

Martha: Yeah, well of course, but by that time it was different. The Second World War the people weren't as vicious as they were the First World War, you haven't any idea how. My mother was at a women's meeting, she was in War work like everybody else was, Red Cross work and so on, and people not knowing that she was German, they'd say, "Oh I'd be afraid to be in the same room with a German," and my mother spoke out and said, "Well, I'd better get out then or something like that, cause I'm German." "Oh, my goodness they'd say." She really felt bad but that's the way they felt and anything that tasted of German at all, music, Mendelssohn, was not played, Bach or Beethoven were not played, everything was tabood. Anything German was tabooed so it was kind of a lost profession when I started in in 1914. Course it started in 1917 and we were in it and I was out of the profession before then and I went into upper grade. Upper grade elementary.

Cliff: Did you teach here mostly?

Martha: Yes, I was in Washougal 9 years.

Cliff: What years was that?

Martha: Well, I came in 1925 and there was only one 7th grade and I taught it and every kid had to go through my 7th grade so all the young people in

Washougal are my pupils. So I was pretty well known. Won't you come in? I think it's much more beautiful outside.

Cliff: Well, it's beautiful outside.

Martha: This house is so cold.

Cliff: I imagine you had a lot of momentos from . . .

Martha: Oh yeah, I showed some pictures a couple of nights ago on New Zealand and Australia and I hadn't put it away yet.

Cliff: You've had a chance to do some traveling then.

Martha: Yeah, I was in the South Seas in January.

Cliff: Oh, this last January? I see you have Mr. Attwell's latest book here.

Martha: I have both of them there.

Cliff: Yes both of them. Oh, did you get these the other day then?

Martha: No, I've had those for a couple of months.

Cliff: And Ivan's Fishwheels. I really like this book of Ivan's on Fishwheels. It's got a tremendous amount of pictures and stuff in it that I revert to quite often.

Martha: Yes, I think it's very, very interesting. Excuse me just a moment. This is from Fiji.

Cliff: That's a beautiful shell, isn't it? Usually when it's so light on the edges, there's some damage to it.

Martha: Yeah, I even got it home. I stuffed it full of clothes. Yeah, most of those are Jim's books, the other one, too.

Cliff: Did you know many of the people up in the Skamania area during your early years here?

Martha: Well, I taught in Cape Horn my last four years and before that I taught at Husum for four years so I'd get through White Salmon and Underwood and up in there and I was very well acquainted with Margaret Shields who was county school Superintendent for many years and we were very close friends.

Cliff: Well, I really enjoy gathering all this information that I can get. I'd sure like

to see someday.

Martha: My first knowledge of Skamania County was when a threshing outfit owned by a man that lived in Skye, Albert Pohl. He used to come all through the country. Go up with fellow Cape Horn people that would, oh, they'd have to have a water wagon and helpers that went with the outfit all the time and they were all his neighbors around there in Cape Horn so we got acquainted with the _____ and the Angelo's and all those people from Cape Horn. Though those threshing outfits that went through every year so we'd see those same people every year.

Cliff: Oh yeah, did you use them on your place here?

Martha: Oh, we had a grain field too and would thresh.

Cliff: I just talked to Mrs. Cottrell. You know Mrs. Cottrell?

Martha: Oh, sure.

Cliff: And we were interested in, for the museum, on the power plants on the upper river. Because the upper power . . .

Martha: Where there?

Cliff: Glen's upper power plants were on the . . .

Martha: Up at Duggan Creek.

Cliff: Yes, uh huh, up that way. His upper power plants were on Skamania County and, course, quite historical significance.

Martha: Well, Duggan Creek is in Skamania County, isn't it?

Cliff: Yes, all of that up there. Well, anywhere above, well, before you get to the Steel Bridge, everything on the other side is Skamania County. So I was talking to her about the old days and up in the Upper Washougal and she had quite a bit of information.

Martha: Well, it was nice road of there now. I remember when I taught at Cape Horn, I quit teaching in '46, I retired in '46, So at that time I had some pupils up in there and I remember going to see one of them one time and I could just hardly get through. That was on the Layton place, just on a ways past Fannings and the road was, well, to Fannings was passable, but beyond . . . but in fact, I remember when Clara Fanning was my school clerk up here at

Cape Horn when I finished teaching up there and I had to go up and see him occasionally because he was the clerk and he'd have to sign papers and things, and I remember that I couldn't get quite to his home that I had to leave the car around the corner before I got to his home.

Cliff: When you were last teaching at Cape Horn at the Cape Horn School up there, was the school still in operation on Bear Prairie?

Martha: Yes, also in Skye. Skye School yeah, Margaret Shields was teaching there then. That was Skye School and that was later sold to Tom Lexow and he lived there for quite a while until he moved up to . . .

Cliff: He lived there quite awhile didn't he? While he worked in the bank in Washougal.

Martha: Yes he did, yeah in Camas really.

Cliff: Yeah, a lot of stuff going on up there.

Martha: Oh yes, indeed. Well, that would be, the only trouble is it would be so far for most people to go to up there to Dougan Creek. That would be the only objection I would have to it, although it would be nice to have some sort of . . . things connected with the power plant, I should think.

Cliff: The main thing is trying to, what we needed to do was the dates of some of . . . of when Glen put the power plants in and the dates of when . . .

Martha: Well, you see he had this power plant right up here . . .

Cliff: Yes, the one right here on the corner where Barbers lived, he had that one. She said that was built, I believe it was in '24, or '22. They were living on, in the little house on the dam in '22 when the water rose so high her daughter was born there and she was one week old that they had to come out and get them and get her out of there.

Martha: Oh is that right? And that was in '22? One of her daughters was born then there.

Cliff: Uh huh. The oldest one, the one that's married to Leon Higgonson. Are any of the other Fords that are here, any relation?

Martha: No, no relation at all. My husband came from the Ozarks, too, I guess he was just born in the Ozarks. I don't think he lived there very long. But, he and his mother went to Nebraska then, I think Northwestern Nebraska and the Sand Hills there. They were there for quite awhile. I guess he was a young man

and he enlisted from there into the Navy in World War I. Then, for some reason or other, she remarried. My husband's father died when my husband was only two years old so he doesn't remember anything about it, and his mother remarried and I don't know whether she then went to the Sand Hills or whether she was married here. I don't know that but anyway they came out to Vancouver then. It was here that I met my husband.

Cliff: After the war?

Martha: Oh yes, that was after the war. He'd been on transports in the First World War in the Navy.

Cliff: When did you get married?

Martha: In '23, and he passed away in '28 so we weren't married very long. C: Oh is that right? He was real young then.

Martha: Yes, pneumonia was a killer in those days.

Cliff: Yeah that's right. And you didn't marry again?

Martha: No, my mother was alone and I came out and stayed with my mother then again after that.

Cliff: Here on the farm here?

Martha: Yes, I came out on the farm again. We had built a house in Washougal and I rented that and came out here.

Cliff: It was just you and your mother there then.

Martha: So my mother and I were here again for a good many years, from '28 on until '43 when she passed away and since then, I've been here alone.

Cliff: Did you both live down in this house then?

Martha: Oh yes, this was built in 1906. Yeah, the house across the way was built when I was about two months old.

Cliff: The house I live in was built in 1903. Well, it's the Acker house, just past Mrs. Cottrell. Did you know where Mrs. Cottrell lived just across the river? And you know where Mrs. Louie Chevron lives?

Martha: Yes

Cliff: Well, it's the house right next to her.

Martha: Oh, Harold Ackers house. Doesn't Harold Acker live there anymore?

Cliff: Oh no, we've lived there about 10 years .

Martha: Where did Harold Acker move to?

Cliff: I don't know, I think two people had it before I did. I bought it from some people by the name of Ward, Don and Sylvia Ward.

Martha: Oh yes, I see, well I hadn't . . . I knew Harold Acker was a youngster, you know, but I didn't keep track of him. His wife also went to school to me. Harold didn't go to school to me but his wife did, Martha Catto, but I didn't see them and didn't remember what became of them. I just simply supposed they still lived there. He used to work for the PUD, you know.

Cliff: Oh, Mrs. Chevron said that she remembered when the house was built because when she was a little girl, she used to go by there and watch them build it.

Martha: Yeah, she didn't live there then.

Cliff: No, not in that house but she said when she was a little girl she used to go by there and see them building the house and she said she remembered. I think she said she was 13 years old.

Martha: The house that your living in now. Yes I know that Harold Acker lived just back of his grandparents' house. The one that faces Main St. belonged to his grand-parents, that was an Acker house, too.

Cliff: Well the one that faces Main St. is the one I live in.

Martha: Oh, that's where you live. Oh the black one, oh, I remember that, yes. Well, Harold lived behind that.

Cliff: Oh, well, there is an Acker back there now.

Martha: Well, that's Harold then.

Cliff: But he works for the . . .

Martha: No, he doesn't work now anymore. He hasn't worked for a long time.

Cliff: Oh, must not be Harold then because . . .

Martha: No. Harold and Martha were injured in an automobile accident a couple of years ago with the Sullivans.

Cliff: Oh, he worked in the woolen mill.

Martha: Well, he used to work for the PUD.

Cliff: Well, they lived two houses behind us, oh, yeah, they still live there.

Martha: Yes Ward lived in that house. Oh, yes . . . no Harold never did live in that house.

Cliff: It belonged to his parents?

Martha: His grandparents. His parents lived right next to Mrs. Cottrell; his mother lives right next to Mrs. Cottrell and Glen Cottrell passed away within this year.

Cliff: Yeah, she told me it was the first of April. I used to go down and talk to him all the time.

Martha: Yes, well, I knew him. Fact, we were grade school age, we went to grade school.

Cliff: Is that right, Glen?

Martha: Glen was just a year older than I. Yes, he was very nice and I knew Georgia, too quite well. She wasn't at school but I knew her quite well.

Cliff: Well, you can remember when he was building all the dams along here then.

Martha: Oh yes, when his father let them wash away. Many, Many of them washed out.

Cliff: He said . . . I was just wondering if any time when you had the wheat up here, the grain, did you ever take it down to their mill there and have it ground into flour?

Martha: Well, I don't remember whether we did or not. I don't think we ever had any flour made.. We used the grain for feed, you see, and I don't think we ever had any flour made. I do remember when the flour mill was there, though. I remember being in it and seeing it and seeing it work as a youngster.

Cliff: She said that all the people around the country were bringing so much grain and that Glen and his father would grind it up and make flour.

Martha: Well, hardly Glen did. Glen was a pretty little boy at that time.

Cliff: Oh was it? She said that they had this flour mill and that they ground up the wheat.

Martha: Yes, his father had the flour mill and the dam there and, of course, the dam washed away and took the bridge along, so we had to ford the river and had a ferry there and used to get across the river just above where the dam was and we went across on the ferry.

Cliff: Had to go up the bank there.

Martha: Yes. It had to go up the bank and I remember driving a colt that was newly broken in and had quite a time getting him to go up that steep bank.

Cliff: You were riding a colt then, huh?

Martha: No, driving it. My mother was driving it, driving a buggy. Yeah, that was when I was in grade school.

Cliff: Well, I want to thank you very much and I'm glad I got those pictures back. I didn't know that that was the history of them either.

Martha: Well, I don't know that there of any use to Skamania County really; the one of Klickitat County you can. In fact, I guess as far as that goes, I don't know but what you could have it. The only trouble is that it's the only one I have in the blue tint but I don't know as if I need them anymore.

Cliff: If you have the snapshot of the . . .

Martha: I think I still have the negative as far as I know but the other one I would give to the Clark County

Cliff: Well, could I write on the back then where the location of that was . . .

Martha: Yeah, this was the mouth of, at the source of . . .

Cliff: It was in the Surprise Lakes area? _____ Creek area?

Martha: Oh no, no, no. Oh, excuse me, yeah, I was thinking of the Jones'. This is beyond _____ Creek, near Twin Buttes.

Cliff: And see beyond _____ Creek you go to the top of the hill there, it's called, well, it's Surprise Lakes there.

Martha: Yes, I think they're off to the right a little bit farther.

Cliff: And you see the Surprise Lakes, In the Surprise Lakes we used to pick huckleberries. We had the uphill side of the road and the Indians had the flat and lower sides of the road.

Martha: Yeah, well, this was . . . Meadow Creek was the name.

Cliff: Yeah, well we needed to get the information on the thing because it would have . . . it helped to have that so you can definitely tell somebody . . . well, this is a Tee Pee that was taken at . . . in the huckleberry fields. A specific place where it was taken. I imagine that there are some other pictures in that place, but these were the only two that were both exactly the same and I . . .

Martha: Well, I don't know that there of any use to Skamania County really; the one of Klickitat County you can. In fact, I guess as far as that goes, I don't know but what you could have it. The only trouble is that it's the only one I have in the blue tint but I don't know as if I need them anymore.

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Cliff: Well, could I write on the back then where the location of that was . . .

Martha: Yes, I had exhibited these once in a photo exhibit. I don't know, I was trying to think about when that was but . . .

Cliff: Oh, when the picture was taken? Well, we could come pretty close I would imagine.

Martha: Well, let's see. It's before 1929 because I think I exhibited these about 1929 and I had these pictures a couple of years.

Cliff: Was your husband with you at the time?

Martha: No, '29 was after he had passed away. No, my mother was with me at the time. We used to drive up to the huckleberry fields and take a camera along. I don't know, what I say about 1927 or 1928.

Cliff: Your husband died what year?

Martha: '28. That doesn't mean he wasn't living at the time, I might have gone up there with my mother, I don't know. I would say about . . . no, I finished what was their normal school in Bellingham and I took two photography courses the last two summers that I was there and it was 1928 and 1929 is when I made this picture and that could have been taken even before I was married.

Cliff: The picture could have?

Martha: Could have been, yes.

Cliff: That would have been before '23. Thank you very much and we'll . . .

Martha: I also used a different chemical and made a moonlight picture, I mean a sunset picture. I had a lake picture with . . . that was taken up at Bellingham Bay though and then there was a skiff there and it was a brown effect. It was beautiful. Yeah, the Fishwheel was one that Ivan had and then he lost it.

Cliff: Oh, Ivan lost it?

Martha: He was telling me about it.

Cliff: Which Fishwheel was it?

Martha: I don't know, it isn't in his book, he didn't use it in his book. I think I have it here.

Cliff: Yes, it shows up this Indian Tee Pee real well and then, of course, the Twin Buttes behind that tree in the back ground, it makes a pretty nice picture titled, "Moonlight." Did you and your husband have any sons or daughters?

Martha: No children. No, I'm all alone in the world, just our kin and that's part of the world anyway. I thought I had them in this drawer anyway. Here's the Washougal school picture. Now let's see I'll show you Glen Cottrell over there.

Cliff: In the picture?

Cliff: Well, I see you've done something that a lot of people don't do and that's get some names down on pictures.

Martha: Yes, I've been trying to get in touch with people that were also on the picture and try to locate the rest of them that I didn't remember. Well, Glen Cottrell

must have been on here unless he was . . . Otto Acker is on here.

Cliff: Oh, Otto Acker, huh?

Martha: Do you know him?

Cliff: Yes

Martha: Otto is down here in front somewhere. There he is, here.

Cliff: No. Where was this school located?

Martha: That was where the old Columbia School is now. Used to be High School.

Cliff: Let's see here Albert _____, Alfred _____, Borgan, Workman, Olson. Oh, there's your picture, number 10.

Martha: I think I put those somewhere else because they were crowding me in here and they're not in here now. These are all pictures of people who are, Here is the old grange hall in Washougal. Do you know where the library is in Washougal?

Cliff: Oh yes, uh huh.

Martha: Right there beside that. It was torn down, that was Hendrickson's store at that time. I'm sorry, I can't lay my hands on the pictures right now.

Cliff: You should have something written on these . . .

Martha: Charlie Ferguson is one here and this is Mrs.; this was Mrs. LaLonne, . . . Hendrickson's niece; and this is Henry Hendrickson, George Hendrickson's brother.

Cliff: Here's somebody in a World War I uniform, isn't it there? No, I guess not.

Martha: And that was the shed. The Grange shed where the people would come and drive their horses in there and I kept my horse. I rode to school, and I kept my horse in there.

Cliff: Oh, you went to this, oh, where the school here, is the picture I got. Frank Gibbons, is that from the Gibbons . . .

Martha: Frank Gibbons, yeah. Frank was . . .

Cliff: From the Gibbons Creek Family?

Martha: Yes, that's right.

Martha: I think I put those somewhere else because they were crowding me in here and they're not in here now. These are all pictures of people who are, Here is the old grange hall in Washougal. Do you know where the library is in Washougal?

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Cliff: You should have something written on these . . .

Martha: Charlie Ferguson is one here and this is Mrs.; this was Mrs. LaLonne, . . . Hendrickson's niece; and this is Henry Hendrickson, George Hendrickson's brother.

Cliff: Here's somebody in a World War I uniform, isn't it there? No, I guess not.

Cliff: Stevenson?

Martha: Stevenson, oh, that was a long time ago. You didn't see Glen Cottrell, huh?

Cliff: What year was this? 1904?

Martha: Yeah, that was my last year in Washougal. That is I finished the State Aid Grade examination in 1904, in May of 1904, but I didn't go to high school until 1905, the fall of 1905.

Cliff: You were in the upper class?

Martha: Oh, yes, and he was our teacher and his wife and daughter.

Cliff: Could you look them all up and name them right now without looking at the backs?

Martha: Oh yes, I know it all.

Cliff: Maybe Glen was playing hooky on that day.

Martha: Well, now he might not have been, wait a minute. Glen was a year older than

I and this was my last year in school, he might have been out by then.

Cliff: Well, I'll just take this and we'll hang it up in the museum.

Martha: Yeah, well you may have it. Here's Charlie Ferguson used to have . . .

Cliff: Charlie Ferguson, owned a wagon shop or carpenter type work or

Martha: Yeah something like that.

Cliff: You'll have to put all that stuff on the back here.

Martha: This was the Goot's dairy, this is the Goot family, pretty well faded.

Cliff: Which ones Albert?

Martha: That's Albert and that's Carl, Martha and Emily. You know Carl Goot maybe?

Cliff: Well, I know Albert. He lives down by the Sandy swimming hole. I was in the Air Force with his son, Albert Jr.

Martha: Oh you were? Albert Junior? He's a major now, isn't he?

Cliff: Yeah, I think so but I think he got out, though.

Martha: That's the Goot family; a little later that's in their house and that was their barn here.

Cliff: Is this one of the houses over . . .

Martha: No, that's torn down now but that was the same Goot family as this one.

Cliff: Oh they were a little older, weren't they?

Martha: Yeah, well, there's Carl.

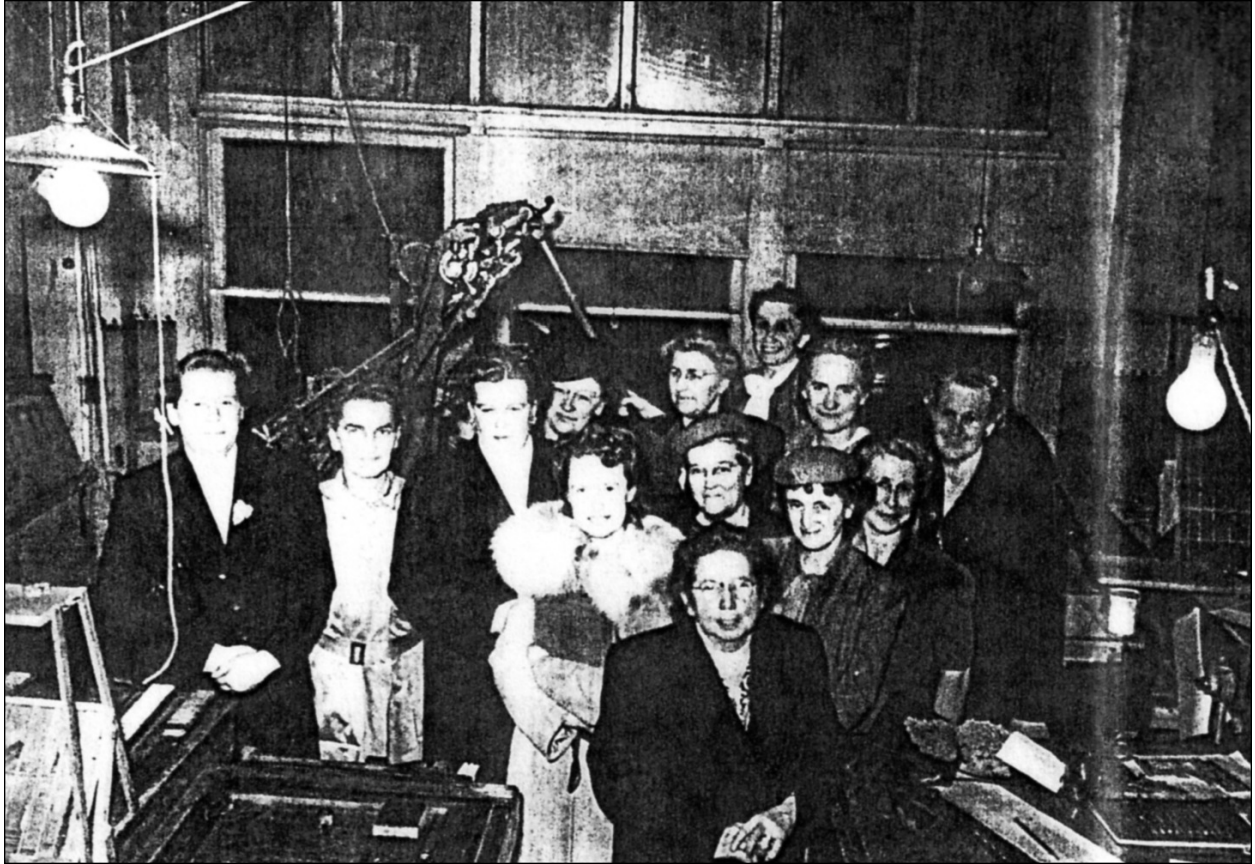
Cliff: I see the tall boy there in the back.

Martha: There's Carl and Pete and Martha and Emily. Yeah, that was their house that was torn down, too.

Cliff: Oh, that's beautiful. Yeah, you'll have to get those written on the backs so that their value is there then when they're written on. Well, thank you very much

and I sure appreciate everything.

Martha: Well you're very welcome. I'm sorry I don't, did you . . . (*end of tape*)



Washougal Business and Professional Women's Club. In front: Janette Halling. Second row: Winnie Minor, Maude Sill, Florence Minium, Clara Nystrom. Back row: Julia Suber, Maude Teuscher, Anne Salt, Mara Ford, Agatha McCuddin, Hilda Haglund, Gudrun Jemtegaard, Tessee Smead.

Distinguished Service Award Presented to Martha Ford



Mrs. Martha Ford

Mrs. Martha Ford, Route 2, Box 586, Washougal, Wednesday, May 27 was presented the "Distinguished Service Award" by State Jaycee President Max Alton and the Camas-Washougal Jaycees at Camas Inn, as a special feature of the Centennial Paperama

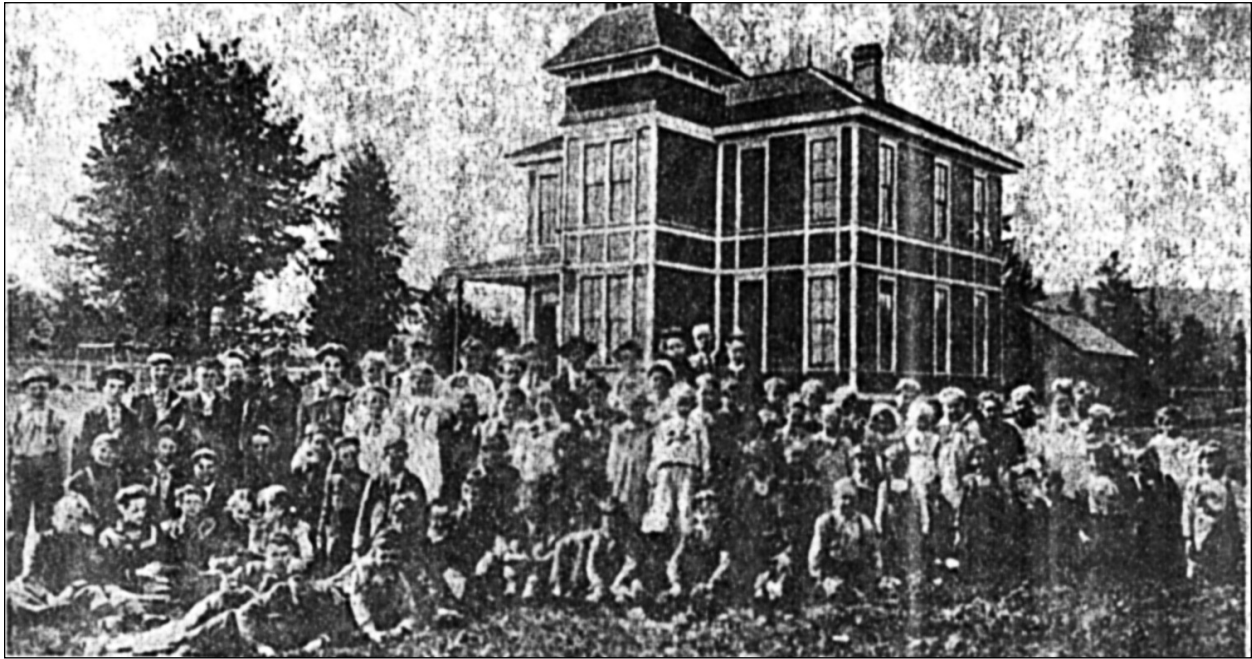
banquet.

Mrs. Ford also received from Jaycee President Gordon Messick the "Distinguished Citizen" certificate from Secretary of State Lud Kramer.

A retired school teacher in both Clark and Skamania counties, Mrs. Ford is former secretary of the Retired Teachers Association of Washington state, past president of Camas-Washougal Soroptimists Club, active member of the Fort Vancouver Historical Society, Skamania Historical Society, Southwest Washington Young Life board, Business and Professional Women's club, Washougal Grange, Washougal Women's club, Sunnyside Mother's club, Community Garden club, Bethel Congregational church, Bethel Society, Cactus Society of Oregon, and Y.M.C.A. board of Vancouver.

She taught at Washougal, Salmon Creek and Husum. She has traveled extensively throughout Europe several times and lives today at the confluence of the Washougal and Little Washougal rivers.

At 81, she remains active, alert, energetic, and drives her own car wherever she wishes to go, including occasional trips to California.



Early Washougal school was located where Columbia school now sits.
Martha is No. 10 (back row) in this historic photo.



Martha Ford attended school at this site.

Pioneer teacher still active

WASHOUGAL — Seventy-seven years ago, Martha Ford attended school on the site of the present Columbia School in Washougal.

Recently she returned to tell the pupils what it was like in the old days.

Mrs. Ford, now 84, attended the lone Washougal school of its day from 1896 to 1904. She then went to high school in Portland and on to college in Bellingham. The next two years were spent studying in Europe, from 1909 to 1911.

Returning to Washougal, she took the teachers' examination here and became an instructor in German.

Her last four years of teaching were at the old Cape Horn school.

Looking back on her teaching career, Mrs. Ford recalls that at one time she milked 12 cows each morning before going to school and had the same duties awaiting her when she returned in the evening.

Still active in community affairs, Mrs. Ford continues to enjoy living a farm life, residing at Rt. 2, Box 586, Washougal.

Love of flowers

Trees, shrubs still flourish under Martha Ford's care.

by **PAT MOSER**
News Staff Writer

WASHOUGAL — Behind the towering holly trees, flowering rhododendrons and climbing wisteria vines you'll find Martha Ford, 88, whose life is like turning pages of history.

She was born eight years after the town of Washougal was platted and her home at the delta of the Washougal and Little Washougal rivers nestles among the spring blooms, many on plants tended by her father at the turn of the

century.

The trees and shrubs, like her, are the sole survivors of the Gustav Kloninger family which was a major source of bulbs, seeds and plants for Portland dealers. At one time Mrs. Kloninger had a five-acre field of dahlias.

The old flowering tree branches have lengthened over the years until they are unable to support themselves. They are propped up by boards.

Mrs. Ford needs a cane to get around her three acres, all that

remain of the 80-acre farm her father bought after immigrating from Germany in 1887.

Mrs. Ford's companions, Sam, a four-year-old part-Pomeranian dog, and Charlie, a two-year old tabby cat, romp around the holly trees planted by her father which shade the home the Kloningers built in 1905-06.

The Kloningers found it hard to scratch out a living rising crops and dairy cows. But their love for flowers brought a surplus of plants and bulbs which soon caught the attention of Portland seed dealers.

"The seed dealers used to come across the Columbia River by boat on Saturday night, the time depending on how much freight they had," she said. "They brought their fishing poles with them and stayed until Monday. It was an outing for them. We found we could make a better living from flowers than general farming."

The ties to Germany remained with the Kloninger family. When Mrs. Ford was three years old she took her first of six trips to Germany.

Mrs. Ford attended the Washougal school and after completing the eighth grade she went to Portland's only high



The gate to the Martha Ford home is flanked by giant trees planted by her father.



Sometimes the action comes from Sam, a part Pomeranian, and Charlie.



Mrs. Ford spent her younger days in this home which is just across the street.

school, which today is the site of Lincoln High School on the west side.

After graduation, she left for two years in Germany in 1909. She studied near Berlin, close to her family's former home.

She already spoke fluent German, the language commonly spoken in the Kloninger's Washougal household.

"My father believed that if someone spoke to you in a language, you should answer him in that language," she said.

She returned to America with a certificate to teach German and got a job in the three-year Washougal High School, site of the present Hathaway school. That began a teaching career which spanned generations ending when she retired, as a seventh grade teacher at the old Cape Horn school in 1946.

"We taught more fundamentals in those days," she said. "I suppose you'd call it old fashioned."

In 1923 she married Sim Ford and moved into town. He died of pneumonia 4½ years later on Valentine's Day. They were childless.

In 1936 she returned to Germany with her mother.

"The country was under Hitler and it was the year of the

Olympics," she said. "They went out of their way to make us feel welcome after they heard who we were and that we were from America. We could see right through them, but their people couldn't."

She bought a car in Europe and drove 6,000 miles. She still drives.

"I was in the country when it was a republic, under Kaiser Wilhelm (the World War I leader), Hitler and the present regime, she said.

But her travels haven't been confined to crossing the Atlantic. She has been to Hawaii twice and visited the South Seas and Australia in 1974.

In 1967 she visited the Holy Land.

Her old students drop by to see her regularly, and she is invited often to speak to Washougal students.

"I like to talk about the past and I think that's characteristic of old people," she said.

This spring the buds are opening again on Gustav Kloningers yard and his only child tends them as she tells about the days when entire fields along the two river would break out in colorful blossoms.

"It was the love of flowers that got all this started," she explained.

Martha Ford remembers . . . riding horseback to school

Martha Ford, at age 93, is living history.

She not only recalls accurately and vividly the early days of Washougal, but she still participates in civic and church organizations, has a host of admiring friends, has driven a car for 60 years, and still enjoys traveling, having made flights to Europe the past three years.

This remarkable woman still does not have gray hair.

Scholarly, interesting and enthusiastic, Martha Ford was born of German parents, Gustave and Anna Kloninger, who left for America on their wedding day.

They came to Washougal by boat, which came ashore in the sand at Parker's Landing, to inspect the 80 acres on the Washougal River that they had purchased for \$500.

Martha was born in a small cabin at the top of the hill across from her present residence, a five-bedroom home her parents built at a later time.

To attend classes, she walked to the Sunnyside School until, in the second grade when her umbrella was stolen, her father decided he would pay tuition for her to attend school in Washougal.

"There were six Krohn boys ahead of me in school at Sunnyside," Martha recalls. "The Krohns had 15 children.

Her first school day at Washougal, in a spelling bee, she outlasted big John Herzig, which pleased her so much much she still remembers it.

She rode horseback to school for many years, attending with children of the Herzigs, Cottrells, Campens, Webbers, Goots, Husbys, and more.

As there was no running water in the school building, Martha and another pupil would often be chosen to bring a bucket of water from the pump by Henriksen's store, a considerable distance.

Public dipper

"When we returned, we would pass up and down the aisles and everyone would drink from the dipper," Martha explains laughing at the thought of how many germs were distributed



MARTHA K. FORD

that way.

Growing up with the small town of Washougal, she remembers the grocery store, four or five saloons, and two blacksmith shops, which were important to her. "I rode so much. I would go four miles to catch my horse to ride two miles to Sunday School," she says, laughing demurely.

She would leave her horse in a covered stall at Henriksen's store, hanging her saddle behind the door, go to school and return at noon to feed and water the horse. She remembers the town pump in the center of town and the muddy roads.



MARTHA K. FORD

Martha, always self-sufficient, was taught the Greek alphabet at home by her scholarly father, a college graduate, before she learned the ABCs at school. She also learned German at home, and how to milk a cow at age six.

Her mother, a bride of 19 when she left the culture of a German city for the raw country of the Washougal area, was a very wonderful woman, according to Martha, raising acres of flowers which she sold in Portland, sending them to market by steamer.

Acres of flowers

At one time, Mrs. Kloninger had five acres of dahlias, with four to five different varieties; a quarter acre of lily-of-the-valley; and sold plants and bulbs as well as cut blooms.

When World War I came, she switched to vegetables to aid the war effort. Also, before the war the family home was served by a telephone, paying 50 cents a month for a switchboard connection. But during and after the war there was a shortage of wire and the service was discontinued for a time.

In 1904 Martha Kloninger graduated from the eighth grade in Washougal. The next year, to further her schooling, she enrolled at Portland High School (later Lincoln). The family was more familiar with Portland, through the flower

business, than they were with Vancouver.

The late Cecil Van Vleet of Parker's Landing, was a classmate, interested in higher mathematics.

Because the Jesse Harkins sternwheeler did not run on Sundays, Martha only went home to Washougal in mid-year and for summer vacations.

After completing high school, she attended the University of Washington, and graduated from Bellingham Normal (now Western Washington State University).

Two years study in Germany, from 1909 to 1911, followed her college days. The crossing was made by boat, a trip she had first made at age two, when she was taken to see her ailing grandmother.

World traveler

She had enjoyed travel ever since, making the round trip to Europe nine times, three by ship and six by air. While there she visits relatives in both East and West Germany, as well as other countries. She has also visited Hawaii, the South Seas, Australia and New Zealand. Another interest is stamp collecting, a hobby her father started in 1868.

She taught school for several years from Salmon Creek to Cape Horn, milking 12 cows before and after her day's work. In 1920 she bought a Dodge car and learned to drive.

It was in 1923 in the Baptist Church in Vancouver that Martha was married to Sim Ford, a mechanic. Five years later Sim fell victim to pneumonia and died.

Martha, with her mother's determination, kept her interest in life. She enjoyed music, playing both the violin and piano, and at one time organized an orchestra.

Clarence Beatty played trumpet; Florence Rich (later Smith), piano; Florence Greenman and Will Strong, violin; Lee Greenman, piano; and Charlie Strong, cell. "We played together for quite a while," she says.

Martha also enjoyed singing contralto in the church choir, and in the Women's Chorus that sang many years for Crown-Willamette Paper Company events.

She is a member of the Soroptomists, who recently honored her, the Washougal Grange (54 years), the Business and Professional Women's Club (one of the first members), the Oregon Cactus Society, and three historical societies (Vancouver, Skamania and Camas-Washougal.)

She has been honored many times. In 1969-70, she was awarded a United States Chamber of Commerce award as outstanding senior citizen. (Denis Hayes won the junior award.)

I have a had a full life, Martha agrees. "I've been at it so many years, I don't know enough to stop."

W.S.

Longtime resident turns 95

Ford endures area's unfolding history



NINE DECADES — Martha Ford has accompanied the changes in her native Washougal from the late 19th Century when the town was a sleepy river port with mud streets to the last quarter of the 20th Century, when the city boasts electronics factories. Born Sept. 25, 1888 to German immigrants, Ford said one of the biggest advances the city made was the coming of the railroad in the first decade of this century.

by JIM GERSBACH

The gate at the side of the Washougal River Road is pitted and worn, its elaborate metal curves rusted with age.

Pushing it open, one walks past sprawling greenery down a concrete path attacked by moss.

At the end, almost hidden behind wisteria and hanging vines, stands a white Victorian house.

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh goes the broom as the house's owner, Martha Ford, sweeps dead leaves away from her porch.

Ford has been living in this house next to the Washougal River since it was built by her parents in 1906.

Last Sunday Ford celebrated her 95th birthday and took time out from her gardening to talk about nine decades of life in Washougal.

She was born on Sept. 25, 1888, on a hill near where the Little Washougal River falls into its bigger sister.

Her parents, Anna and Gustav Kloninger, had come to Washougal 18 months earlier, leaving their native Germany on their wedding day.

"We always spoke German at home," remembered Ford, who still speaks the language she learned at her parents' knees.

On the land they bought in Washougal, the Kloningers tried general farming. But they soon found such a demand for the flowers they grew in their garden that they became bulb and plant wholesalers, prospering enough to build an imposing two-story house.

Bulb buyers from Portland would take the Saturday boat up the Columbia and, after inspecting the Kloningers' crop,

would spend the night and next day fishing in the Washougal because there was no boat to take them back until Monday morning.

Ford drove the buyers in a horse and buggy to the river dock near where the Pendleton Woolen Mills stands today.

Hardly a trace of the sleepy river port Ford knew then remains.

"You wouldn't recognize a thing," she said of today's town. "South of the Lutheran Church was all wilderness."

Recalling her school days, Ford said, "I rode horseback to school." She stabled her horse during the school in the old grand hall off B Street, and stored the saddle in the grange store run by Camas City Councilwoman Nan Henriksen's grandfather, Jorgen Henriksen.

There was only a grade school in Washougal then so Ford's parents took the remarkable step of sending her to one high school in Portland.

Ford said she believes she was the first person born and raised in Washougal to earn a high school diploma.

Perhaps believing in the bene-fits of exposure to European culture might have on their horseback-riding daughter, the Kloningers sent their only child to a German boarding school for two years.

The German Empire was glittering and elegant in those days before World War I. Ford often took the half-hour train ride to Berlin.

The German capital was full of pomp and circumstance and never more so than when she attended a Wagner opera Kaiser Wilhelm and his family had come to see.

Ford returned to Washougal

before the Great War and taught German. She later taught seventh grade full-time from 1925 to 1933.

During the Berlin Olympics in 1936 she and her mother spent four months visiting relatives and touring Hitler's Reich.

*'I rode horse-
back to school,
took my saddle
off and put it in
the store'*

—MARTHA FORD

When Ford visited after the war she found the county divided. Her parents' birthplaces in Saxony and the Oder Valley had become part of Soviet-controlled East Germany.

Progress has also brought bad things. Fear of violent crime was unknown in early Washougal, said Ford.

Forgetfulness is beginning to bother Ford. But she still tends the generations of plants growing all over her yard and greenhouse. Working in the fresh air is one reason she's stayed alive so long, she believes.

Only recently she returned to her potted exotics after having an arthritic knee removed and a plastic one implanted.

Her 11-day recovery in a nursing home has made her more determined to remain as long as her health permits in the house she has lived in for more than three-quarters of a century.

"It's the only home for me," she said.



HOME GATE — Through this gate in 1909 the young Martha Kloninger left for boarding school in Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany. Through 77 years of living in the house her parents build and she inherited, she came and went through the same gate on trips that took her throughout Europe,

Australia and New Zealand. Today the 95-year old Martha Ford spends much of her time tending her garden. Here she sweeps leaves. Said Ford of the house and yard, "It's the only home for me."

POST Photo by Jim Gersbach.

Clark County

Washougal is woman's home

by VICTORIA SALTER

Correspondent, The Oregonian

WASHOUGAL — For most of her 97 years, Martha Ford has called Washougal home.

Her two-story house, within view of the Washougal River, is on the 80-acre tract where she was born, the only child of educated German immigrants.

"I was a foreign-born kid and was taught to speak German at home . . . Many people learned to speak colloquial German, but I learned literary German, and that was a big help," Ford said, explaining how she spent two post-high school years in a boarding school near Berlin before World War I.

As a child, she rode horseback to nearby Sunnyside School. After grade school, her parents sent her by sternwheeler to Portland, where she was a boarding student at Portland High School.

"I was the first Washougal-born child to start high school," she recalled.

Her 31-year teacher career began at Washougal High School and "came full circle," ending at Cape Horn-Skye school, down the road from her childhood home.

In the intervening years, Ford taught classes in Vancouver, Venersbord, Salmon Creek, and in Lewis and Klickitat counties.

Her high school teaching career ended after one year of teaching German, English and algebra. Washougal High got state accreditation and she didn't have a certificate to teach high school.

Ford moved on to West Mill Plain Grade School and attended summer school at Bellingham Norman School — out of which evolved Western Washington University — to earn her teaching degree.

Teaching in those days was a mixture of fundamentals and social life.

For Ford, the most memorable part of teaching was "the social life in Salmon Creek," where she taught five years and met her husband, Sim.

In reminiscences written for a Washougal River neighbor, Ford said, "Teaching (was) drilled in addition, multiplication and other facts until they were mastered. This was the accepted teaching method."



The Oregonian/BRENT WOJAHN

Martha Ford has seen a good bit of Washougal history in her 97 years.

Physical education was recess. Students played baseball, and "I, of course, was the umpire. We played nearby schools," she said, mentioning Felida, Baker and Pleasant Valley grade schools.

With groups of friends, she went on weekend tours to scenic spots such as Beacon Rock, Mount St. Helens lava caves and Multnomah Falls. She coached community plays to raise money to buy school equipment.

A party that started as a housewarming led to weekly parties and dances.

Ford said Salmon Creek had "a two-room school. My (own) primary teacher back at Sunnyside was my employee." Ford was superintendent. "I am still very close to old pupils. WE try to get together at least every summer.

Named Distinguished Washougal Citizen in 1970, Ford has been a member of the Camas/Washougal Soroptomist Club for 35 years and the Grange for 50 years and was active in Camas/Washougal Business and Professional Women's Club until it

disbanded.

She attends Camas/Washougal Community Garden Club "when I can get there" and is a member of Oregon Cactus Society, nurturing dozens of cacti, tall and small.

"I couldn't get on without my garden," she said, referring to the peas, corn, carrots and cabbage she grows and showing off trays of green tomatoes she was trying to ripen.

An adventurous person, Ford drove all over the United States and turned 100,000 miles on at least two speedometers. But age and a recent cataract operation have taken their toll. "I could get my (driver's) license, but I don't want to," she said. But losing that mobility is "so inconvenient! So exasperating!"

"I'm interested because I've lived here so long. I saw Washougal grow up, so the historical society is right down my line," she said. She has contributed items to all three societies and has recorded "tapes of the way things used to be."



MILAN CHUCKOVICH/The Columbian

Martha Ford, 100 years old on Sept. 25: "It's just another birthday party."

Washougal celebrates centenarian's life

by LEVERETT RICHARDS

Special Writer, The Oregonian

WASHOUGAL — On Thursday, Sept. 22, Martha Ford will blow out a single candle on a birthday cake.

That will only be a symbolic act. If she were to light a candle for each of the 100 years of her busy life, she would need a fire permit.

She will not actually pass the century mark until Monday, Sept. 25, but the Clark County Historical Society will honor her at its Quarterly Rendezvous in Vancouver Sept. 22.

She will be honored for nearly a century of distinguished service to her community. She has been active in the Grange, Patrons of Husbandry, for more than 50 years; a member of the Bethel Congregational Church for 84 years and is still active in a dozen other organizations.

In 1970 she was named "Distinguished Washougal Citizen" for dedicated service to humanity.

She has been active in politics and government since women got the vote (in 1920) — and still is. "Mother used to be the registrar for the precinct. I used to help her keep the poll books and run the elections," she said.

Ford followed every nuance of the recent Republican convention on television. Asked how she would vote in the coming election she said: "Nixon's party, of course."

But she takes the greatest pride and satisfaction in her 31-year career as a grade and high school teacher. Testimonials in

**"I was the first girl
from the Washougal
area to go to high
school**

—Martha Ford

her memory book proclaim her "endless energy and wealth of knowledge . . . her genuine interest in education, politics and the world abroad . . . She was a real teacher. Her stories and her nature walks made even classical music interesting."

"I loved to teach geography, which was my specialty," she said.

She not only preached geography, she practiced it. In the days when travel was slow, wearisome and hazardous, she crossed the Atlantic by steamer 10 times on five trips to Europe. She sailed to Hawaii, and traveled to Alaska, Morocco, Australia and New Zealand. She attended seven world fairs and wore out six or seven automobiles (Fords, BMWs and Dodges) driving more than 100,000 miles around the United States and Europe.

Martha Ford was born to Gustaf and Anna Kloninger in a two-room shack on top of a hill alongside the Little Washougal River. "My parents left Germany in 1887, the day they were married," she recalls. "I came along one year later."

The family lived in the old house, on the hill until 1906 when they moved into the big white house on the Washougal where Martha still lives along with her cat and her faithful dog

Schatz — German for sweetheart. She still does all her own cooking, gardening and housekeeping, with occasional help from a handyman.

She is as alert and active intellectually as she is physically. At an age when most centenarians are confined to their rocking chairs, Ford still tends her flowers at home and pursues a host of community activities. "I would get out a lot more if I didn't have to rely on friends for transportation now," she complained. She decided to quit driving a few years ago after a cataract operation.

What is the secret of her longevity?

"Maybe it's the outdoor life I have lived," she suggested.

When she was six she started helping with the milking on the family ranch. By the time she was 12 she was milking 12 cows. She also helped the family raise bulbs in the basement for sale to the Portland Seed Company and Rutledge.

When she was seven she used to walk two miles up river to the Sunnyside School. Later she went to Washougal's only two-room school, two miles down river. In 1905 she took the sternwheeler Columbia and up the Willamette to Portland where she attended the city's first and only high school, a boarding school, between 14th and 15th Streets on West Morrison St. from 1905 to 1909. It later became Lincoln High School.

"I was the first girl from the Washougal area to go to high school," she said. "I remember the Lewis and Clark Exposition

in 1905,” Ford said. We girls used to go there every Saturday to thrill to the stirring music of Sousa’s band.”

She met and married Sim Ford in 1923. He died of tuberculosis in 1928.

They had no children of their own, but Martha Ford left her mark on hundreds of children in her teaching career. She taught in grade schools at Hammond Creek, Washougal, Husum, Salmon Creek, Venersborg, Skye, West Mill Plain, and Vancouver. She retired in the early 1930’s.

More than 200 well-wishers turned out to help celebrate Ford’s 90th birthday. This year her 100th birthday party is being moved to the Jemtegaard Middle School in Washougal to accommodate the expected crowds.



MIKE NORRIS

Centenarian Martha Ford waters fuchsias in hanging baskets under a magnolia tree at her Washougal home.

It's just another birthday for beloved centenarian

by WENDY REIF

The Columbian

WASHOUGAL — Martha Ford is turning 100 soon, but don't let the numbers fool you.

The popular former teacher may be retired but she's far from retiring.

The daughter of early German settlers in Washougal, Ford continues to live with her dog Schatzie in the home her parents built on the Washougal River in 1906.

"I think he was supposed to be a Dachsund," she said, describing her pet's breed. "His mother had bad company."

Although Ford can't bend down to plant her vegetables, she tends a yard full of perennials and is quick to dig a few up for fellow gardening enthusiasts. She also stays active in several organizations and her church.

What Ford can't do herself she allows other to do — according to her instructions.

Ford passes the century mark Sept. 25, an event that will be marked with a giant party from 2 to 4 p.m. at

Jemtegaard Middle School, 35300 E. Evergreen Blvd. Some 200 to 300 friends and former students are expected by the Soroptimists organizing the celebration.

"Being 100 doesn't make it any different. It's just another birthday party," said Ford, who still has the deflated balloons from her 99th birthday celebration.

"Plain food and no excesses" is how she has maintained her health, she said.

Ford is the daughter of Gustave and Anna Kloninger who left Germany on their wedding day and settled in Washougal in 1887.

Ford was born in Washougal, went through the eighth-grade in Washougal and graduated from high school in Portland.

"I think I was the first girl to graduate (high school) from Washougal," she said.

Ford continued her education at the University of Washington and Bellingham Normal, now Western Washington State University, and became a teacher.

Married to Sim Ford in

1923, Ford was widowed five years later when her husband died of pneumonia. Although she never had children of her own, she loved the children she taught in school, she said.

In her 31 years of teaching Ford worked from Salmon Falls to Cape Horn.

She taught German initially but World War I made everything connected with Germany unpopular.

Her influence in the classroom still is remembered.

"We cruised right through high school after Martha," said George Henriksen, retired Camas businessman who had Ford for seventh-grade in Washougal.

When his Class of 1932 gathered for a 50th reunion, Henriksen recalls telling Ford that he was planning a trip to Budapest and Prague. He told her he was reluctant, however, being 67 years old at the time.

Ford responded: "Why George Henriksen, I was in Budapest on my 90th birthday. We had one blow-out for my birthday."

That was all the convincing Henriksen needed.

Party set for Sunday afternoon

Martha Ford of Washougal remembers in her childhood helping her father plant a small cedar tree near the family mailbox.

Today, that tree towers high above the mailbox.

And the Washougal River Road next to the mailbox has changed, too — from dirt to blacktop.

"I can still in my mind see the horses going by and plowing up the dust in the roadway," she said.

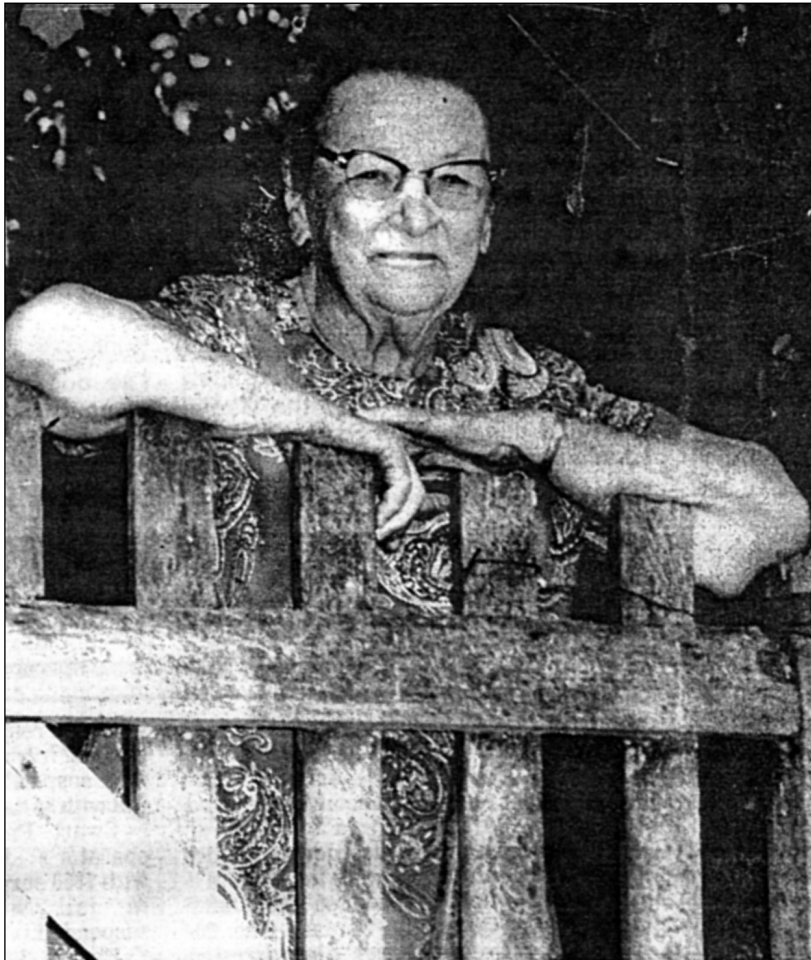
On Sunday, Sept. 25, a 100th birthday celebration for Ford will take place from 2 to 4 p.m., at Jemtegaard Middle School. The party is being thrown by the Camas-Washougal Soroptimists, the Sunnyside Women's Club and women of Bethel Community Church.

Ford is one of two east Clark County residents who will be recognized as part of the Washington state's centennial year celebration. The other is Elsie Stebbins of Camas, who turned 100 on Sept. 2. The centennial officially kicks off this Nov. 8.

President Reagan send Ford a telegram, and "Today" program weatherman Willard Scott has been sent a picture of Ford to display when he announces her birthday.

Ford was born in Washougal in a home her parents settled into after leaving Germany. Gustav and Anna Kloninger left their homeland on their wedding day, passing through Iowa and Portland on their way to the 80 acres in Washougal they had purchased for \$500. That acreage included the Little Washougal River valley and the Sunnyside area.

Near the Christmas of 1906, the Kloningers moved into the five-bedroom house that Ford lives in now. The white, red-roofed house sits back from the Washougal River Road, obscured by trees planted



MARTHA FORD's birthday will be a big event. Ford has lived in Washougal all her life and has been active in the community.

(Staff photo by Jon Larson)

Washougal woman to turn 100 soon

decades ago. The trunks of the holly trees are more than a foot across. A cork elm spreads its branches outward protectively to shield the yard from the sun.

Most of the trees were planted by Ford and her father. Ford says she enjoys sitting in the yard and admiring it. Her dog and cat often play nearby.

Ford's yard offers her a chance to enjoy some of the things she values most in life.

"The things the Lord has given to us. The trees, the sunshine, the rain, and the flowers. And friends, don't forget friends," she said.

Friends can sit on red, steel chairs under the huge cork elm and chat with Ford when they visit. She enjoys showing them the trees, the vegetable garden or her collection of more than 100 different varieties of cacti.

Ford attended school first in the Sunnyside School District, then Washougal. During her first winter at school, the weather was so bad she couldn't attend often. On a few occasions, her father carried her on horseback to the schoolhouse. The next year, she transferred to Washougal, where she completed her education through the eighth grade.

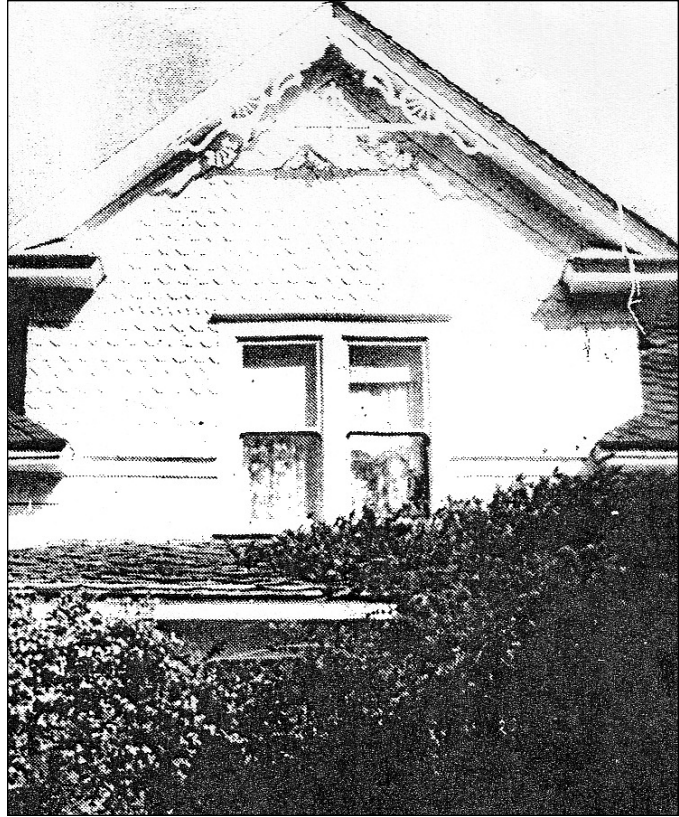
The area had no high school in 1905, so she traveled down the river by sternwheeler to take classes at Portland High School, visiting home on the weekends.

After further education, which included study at the University of Washington and Bellingham Normal School (now Western Washington University) and two years of boarding school study in Germany, she took a job teaching German in Washougal.

Ford taught 31 years altogether, educating children from the Salmon Creek area of Clark County to Cape Horn School until 1946. She began and ended each school day the same way, by milking 12 cows.

In 1923, she married her husband, Sim, who died five years later from pneumonia.

Her mother helped her through her grief and to retain her zest for life. She traveled to Europe nine times and has visited relatives in West Germany and East Germany. Her other travels include visits to Hawaii, the South Seas, Australia, New Zealand and the Holy Land.



MARTHA FORD and her family moved into this home along the Washougal River in 1905. She's lived most of her life here.

(Staff photo by Jon Larson)

100th birthday to be celebrated; Martha Ford is honored by friends

by DICK MEZEJEWSKI

September 25, 1888, Washington was still a Territory. In fact, it wasn't until November 11, 1889 that Washington became a state. If Martha Ford could have her way, Sunday, September 25th, would be just another day. A special day, her birthday, but none the less, just another day.

On that day, Martha Ford will celebrate her 100th birthday and friends are going to make sure it's really special.

On that day, an estimated 300 friends and former students, (Martha taught school in the area for a number of years), are going to get together at the Jemtegaard Middle School in Washougal to honor her.

Martha, a Washougal resident, has been a member of the Skamania County Historical Society since about 1959, as well as Historical Societies in Camas-Washougal and Vancouver.

A pioneer in the true sense of the word, Martha was born along the Washougal River, where she still lives today in the house her father built soon after he, and her mother, emigrated to the area from Germany. (They landed at the present site of Parker's Landing.)

Her education started at an early age. Her father, she said, taught her Greek before she learned the alphabet. This thirst for education followed her through life.

Ford continued her education at the college level and became a school teacher. In 1923, in the Vancouver Baptist Church, she married Sim Ford. Sim died five years later of pneumonia and Martha never remarried.

Always one with a zest for life,



Happy Birthday, Martha — Martha Ford has a lot of memories of what it was like back in the "good old days." Martha will celebrate her 100th birthday on Sunday with about 300 friends. While Martha was born when Washington was still called a Territory, she considers the technology of today something that is very worthwhile.

(Photo, Dick Mezejewski)

Martha continued as a school teacher, and also enjoyed music, played a violin and at one time, organized a local orchestra. She also sang in several choirs.

Her secret to a long life is probably to keep things as simple as possible and no excesses.

Her love of gardening is something that is still evident around her Washougal home. Her mother was known for her green thumb and sold her gardening products in Portland. In those days, the trip to Portland was made aboard the sternwheeler, "Jesse Harkin's."

Sternwheeler trips were replaced in 1920 when Martha bought a Dodge and learned how to drive.

Her recollections of the turn-of-the-century era are crisp and clear.

When World War I came about, the flower garden became a vegetable garden to help the war effort. Teaching German to students also changed as things connected with Germany as the time became

unpopular.

In 1936, Martha "rented a BMW in Germany and drove 6,000 miles around Europe and took in the 1936 Olympics."

Not being one to sit still for very long, Martha has traveled to Europe a number of times, celebrated her 90th birthday in Budapest, Hungary, visited a number of world fairs, traveled to the South Seas and still maintains a flower garden.

Martha, aside from membership in the historical societies, is also a member of Soroptimist International, the Washougal Grange, Business and Professional Women's Club, Oregon Cactus Society, and has been honored by the U.S. and Washington State Chambers of Commerce.

The lady who taught school for 31 years and is more than one year older than Washington is a state, summed up her own life by saying, "I have had such a full life and (have) been at it for so many years, I don't know how to stop. . ."



Martha Ford will be event Grand Marshall

by KARI ROSE

The Post-Record

This year's Frontier Days Parade and Burgerville's Kids Parade will be bigger than ever.

Martha Ford, 100-year-old citizen, will be Grand Marshall in this year's main parade to highlight Washington State's Centennial year. She will ride in one of Wesley Ford's old Model-A's dressed in a Frontier Days costume. Dick Dickerson of Wesley Ford will escort her or, if she prefers, let her drive.

The parade will begin at 11 a.m. Saturday, and entrants should arrive at the Camas-Washougal Industrial Park by 9:30 a.m. No entry fee is required, but all applications must be in by July 5 to be eligible for judging. Spaces will be left for those who wish to show up on the day of the parade.

Parade entrants will have seven divisions in which to participate and earn trophies: Commercial floats, non-commercial floats, equestrian units, motor-vehicles, novelty-marching, student entry, and pooper-scooper.

Commercial float applications have been received by the Washougal Moose Lodge, Riverview Savings Bank, Union Carbide, and Lacamas Credit Union so far. Motor vehicle clubs such as Mustangs Northwest, Unlimited Corvettes and the Midnight Minis (mini low-rider trucks) will also be included.

The parade route begins on 27th Street at the Port of Camas-Washougal Industrial Park and travels along B Street to the overpass. It will then cross over to E Street and continue east to Hathaway Elementary School.

Organizers have made an extra effort to

expand this year's parade.

"We got Camas Days' applications from last year and sent them applications, advertised in the magazine publication Festivals of the Northwest, and went to the Hazel Dell parade of Bands and the Grand Floral Parade to find more entries," said festival organizer Jeff Guard. "We got a lot of response to everything. We're just amazed this year."

Although part of the parade route has been under construction, the roads will be ready well before the parade.

"B Street was paved yesterday," said Washougal Public Works Director Mike Conway. "It will be officially ready. No problem."

Children will have a chance to march in their own parade on Friday, and kids of all ages are welcome to participate. Line up begins at 6 p.m. at the Pendleton Woolen Mill parking lot and judging will start at 6:15 p.m.

"We want anyone from preschool age to Senior Citizens," said Teri Russom, Kids Parade director. "There's lots to do and something for everybody."

The theme of the parade is Happy Birthday Washington, to coincide with the centennial celebration, and Les Sarnoff of radio station KINK will be emcee.

The parade route will begin at the Pendleton Woolen Mill parking lot and travel down 18th Street. It will take a right on B Street and march through town, disbanding at Columbia Field. When they reach the field each child will receive a balloon which will be released to kick off Frontier days.

1991

Friends honor Ford on her birthday





Photos by Pat Moser

It was love of flowers that started the gardens around Martha Ford's home.



Mrs. Bernard Benz, a neighbor, dropped by the mail.

by **EDWIN NEWTON**

The Post-Record

Martha Ford can remember back to the days of covered wagons driven by mule teams and river boats across the Columbia.

Ford maintained her status as the rarest of Camas-Washougal residents — the oldest — when she celebrated her 103rd birthday recently.

About 40 friends, both new and old, came to wish Ford well at a party thrown in her honor last Wednesday. The well-wishers came from Ford's longtime association with local civic organizations, her church and neighbors she has known for 40 years or more.

Just three years ago Ford graced the cover of the Camas-Washougal Post-Record's Washington's Centennial edition in commemoration of the state's 100th birthday. Ford, born in Washougal on Sept. 25, 1888, was actually older than the state of Washington, which was officially added to the union on Nov. 11, 1889.

It's rare that a person gets to the age of 100, but even rarer when that same person can talk — with alertness and wit — about another birthday three years later.

However, Ford said she has no secret recipe for her long life, nor does she have any prevailing words of wisdom. As the gospel song says, she lives one day at a time.

"There's no secret," Ford said. "If there was, everyone would know it. I just lead a full, wholesome life — and try to be as active as possible."

Ford and her parents, Gustav and Anna Klöninger, began their lives in Washougal when they bought 80 acres of wilderness on and near the Washougal River where the Little Washougal enters the main stream. The Klönings owned their own prune dryer, which served people with prune orchards from as far away as Skamania County. Prunes were so popular in those days that Clark County became known as "Prune County." Camas even has an area it calls Prune Hill.

Although it seems ludicrous to debate the issue, the unassuming Ford said the "thinks" she is the oldest living church member of Bethel Community Church. She can recall the many days as a child when she walked four or five miles to Sunnyside to find her horse so she could ride to Sunday School.

With no high school in the area and a family with a strong eye towards education, Ford

remembers making countless trips on the Jessie Hawkins riverboat across the river to attend high school in Portland.

After graduation, Ford spent two years in Germany to enhance and broaden her education. She attended Normal School in Bellingham, Wash., the forerunner of Western Washington University. The education served her well, as she spent the next 36 years of her life teaching school in the area.

Ford was married one, to a young Vancouver auto mechanic, Sim Ford, in 1923. However, he died of pneumonia five years later.

A person like Martha Ford has too many memories, too many experiences to recount in one story. However, she did mention her many trips across the world. Ford was a dedicated traveler early on when it was unusual to go to foreign lands. Besides her family's native homeland of Germany, Ford has also visited Italy, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Australia, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Greece, Romania and more.

Ford has seen a lot of changes take place in her 100-plus years, many of them not for the better, she said. "There's just some things you can't do anything about," she said.

However, one thing that hasn't change is her love for the state of Washington. "This quarter of Washington has been my home all my life," she said, "It's such a beautiful place. Like they say, there's no place like home."

Although she is somewhat confined to a wheelchair these days, Ford still finds time to admire Washington's beauty, she said. "I've always enjoyed the outdoors," she said. "I'm an outdoor person. I've done some gardening and used to grow flowers, as well."

Although she has no immediate family, Ford is never alone. She fondly mentions that she has a dog called Schatz, which is German for sweetheart.

Ford also has a number of friends who keep an eye — and ear — towards her. Maggie Heltzel, a neighbor of Ford's for some 40 years, calls Martha an "inspiration to all who know her."

"I don't know how she does it."

Fort Vancouver Historical Society
of Clark County

P.O. Box 1834
Vancouver, Washington 98668

September 10, 1993

In Appreciation of
MARTHA FORD

Is there anyone alive today who was born in Washington Territory?

Yes, and her name is Martha Ford! Indeed she may be the only survivor of those born in territorial days before the Territory became the State of Washington on November 11, 1889.

Martha Kloninger was born near the Little Washougal River on September 25, 1888, and was 14 months old when Washington became a state. She can be very emphatic that she was not born in the State of Washington. She was born in Washougal in Washington Territory.

The chronicle of her life is sketched in the records at the Fort Vancouver Historical Society of Clark County. She was born of German immigrants. She was the first student from Washougal to attend high school, then the only high school in the area, located in Portland. She studied in Germany two years and attended the University of Washington and the normal school at Bellingham, now Western Washington University.

She taught in several schools and a whole army of students recall her with veneration. She retired from teaching in 1946.

She married Sim Ford in 1923. He died 5 years later.

She served on the Board of Trustees of the Fort Vancouver Historical Society three terms, a total of nine years from 1961 to 1970, and has been a Trustee Emeritus since 1971. She was a trustee when the Carnegie Library was made into the Clark County Historical Society and the Camas-Washougal Historical Society. She is also a member of the Skamania County Historical Society, since 1962, and the Camas-Washougal Historical Society.

John Goodale, a sixth grader at the Gause School in Washougal, won the 1972 Fort Vancouver Historical Society student essay contest. His winning essay was entitled, "Remarkable Martha Ford." She was recorded also in an oral history interview on November 27, 1973.

Her 100th birthday brought celebrations and several articles in the newspapers. Leverett Richard's interview of her appeared in the *Oregonian* August 24, 1988. Wendy Reif interviewed her for the *Columbian* September 14, 1988. On September 25, 1988 the Soroptimists organized a birthday party at the Jemtegaard School in Washougal attended by more than 200 people. Bob Beck interviewed her for his article in the *Columbian* March 7, 1989.

At the Clark County Museum's 25th anniversary in 1989, Martha Ford, then past 100, served on a panel and talked about the past and future of the museum. She took the occasion to remark that too often people did not regard an event as history until it was 50 years old. We should record history every day, she said, because history is being made every day.

Martha is a great story teller. Her travels have often taken her to Europe, also the Holy Lands, Hawaii and Alaska, and to six world fairs.

But her best stories are about teaching and life in Washington. For example, several times during her teaching career she had been invited for Sunday dinner. They would saddle up a horse for her to ride back home. After getting home, she would turn the horse around, slap him on the rump and send him back home. That's something you can't do to a rental car.

Martha is a beautiful name made popular throughout France, Germany, Italy, England and the United States by Flotow's lovely opera, *Martha*. On the following pages appear the story and favorite songs from the opera *Martha*. They are included here as a tribute to our favorite Martha.

GUS NORWOOD
President



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Martha Ford has been a member of the community of Camas-Washougal for most of her adult life; and

WHEREAS, September 25, 1888 is the date of her birth; and

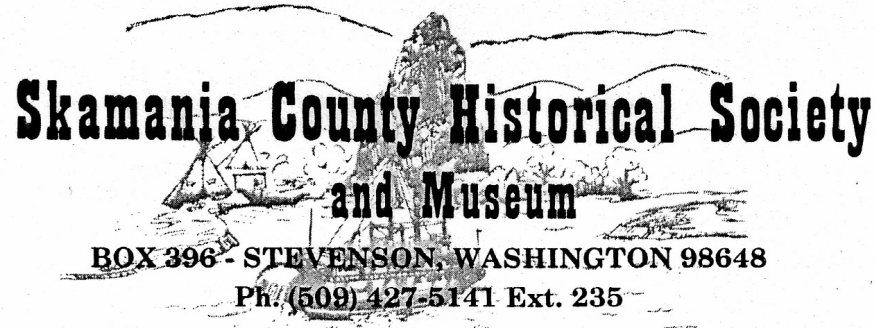
NOW, THEREFORE I do hereby proclaim September 25, 1993 as

“MARTHA FORD DAY”,

in the City of Washougal, Washington.

Signed this seventh day of September, 1993.

CHARLES CRUMPACKER,
Mayor,
City of Washougal



Skamania County Historical Society and Museum

BOX 396 - STEVENSON, WASHINGTON 98648

Ph. (509) 427-5141 Ext. 235

MARTHA KLONINGER FORD

Martha Ford has been a faithful member of the Skamania County Historical Society since 1962. The Society was just newly re-organized (1959) and she often drove to meetings with Della Miller. Della sends her regards, but says she remembers some very exciting car rides; it seems Martha was not afraid to maintain a heavy foot on the accelerator!

Martha has shared with our Society many things, but today we would like to single out one of her many talents: Photography. She donated a print she took in 1920 of an Indian encampment in the huckleberry fields at Meadow Creek near Twin Buttes in Skamania County. She had take two photography courses while living in Bellingham, WA., with her mother and this particular photograph as part of an exhibit she had in 1929. She tinted the black and white print and achieved a wonderful effect. She titled the print "Moonlight".

A laser color copy of this print is provided for Martha's scrapbook.

SHARON TIFFANY
Executive Director