

In Memoriam

FREDERICK “FRITZ”

CARL CRAMER

On Tuesday August 17, 1999, Fritz Cramer passed away. Seven days later on August 24, 1999, his dear wife of fifty-six years died too. Edna Mae and Fritz had grown up together in The Dalles, Oregon. They were loyal supporters of the Discovery Center at Crates Point as well as of the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center.

Fritz was invaluable as a resource person when the replica of the fishwheel was being constructed. This giant wheel stands today in the Harvesting Resources gallery as a reminder of what once was. It is as authentic as possible due to the attention to detail that he provided. For example, he advised the engineers that the wire mesh of the dippers had to have four twists not three. The mesh differed in the number of twists depending on whether it was on a Lower Columbia fishwheel or an Upper Columbia one. Once completed, he also called to our attention the wheel was rotating in the wrong direction. The current of the river is the power that turns the wheel and would dictate the direction of the rotations. This detail was immediately rectified. Fritz was even able to give accurate advice on the dip net held by the Native American statue which stands nearby on the high ledge overlooking the water feature. He was faithful to come one Saturday a month and demonstrate the fishwheel as well as discuss the history of the wheels with visitors and other volunteers.

Fritz was a teacher, always ready to share a story of days gone by. He was particular when it came to accuracy. The story must be correct in every detail. He never used the word "wrong." He would say it is not correct. Fritz inspired the staff and other volunteers at the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center to also strive for accuracy.

He was a true gentleman. We were reminded of that by one of the speakers at the memorial service for Fritz and Edna Mae. What a tribute to be remembered as a

gentleman. It was said when he disagreed with another he did so in a courteous manner. He allowed his opponent to keep his dignity.

The Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center would like to place a plaque honoring Fritz Cramer on the fishwheel structure in the Harvesting Resources gallery. If you would like to contribute to this memorial, send your check to the Center made payable to CGIC and note the purpose is for the Fritz Cramer memorial fund. You can also call the Center with your credit card information.

One last thought. Fritz's philosophy of life was often shared with others and we would like to now share it with you. With a wide smile, he would recite: "Dear Lord, in the battle that goes on through life, I ask but a field that is fair, a chance that is equal in all in the strife, the courage to strive and to dare. If I should win, let it be by this code, with my faith and my honor held high. But, if I should lose, let me stand by the road and cheer as the winner goes by." The original source is from *The American Boy Magazine*.

Thank you, Fritz, for all your dedication, inspiration and instructions. We hope we have been attentive students of yours and can continue to carry on.