

RAYMOND C. and THEO SLY

Vancouver, WA 98663
July 28, 1999
(Received: July 30, 1999)

Skamania County Historical Society and
Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center

Dear Friends:

Enclosed is our check for \$266.00 which we are sending to you in remembrance of my parents, Raymond C. and Theo Sly

My Dad came to Skamania County in 1906 after graduating from the University of Michigan Law School (His doctor told him he'd never survive more than a summer in the Northwest)! Arriving in Stevenson, where he was greeted by his brother, Albert "Bert" Sly, he fell in love with the beauty of the Columbia Gorge and decided to "hang up his law license," since there was no practicing attorney in the area at that time. He served many terms as Skamania County Prosecuting Attorney, had a very successful law practice, and established the Skamania County Title and Insurance Company. He did a great deal of the title work for the development of the Bonneville Dam.

My mother, Theo E. Snyder, came to Stevenson in 1909 (with two years of teaching experience at Bridal Veil, Oregon), to teach in the Stevenson school. She and dad met at "lovers" in a community play and soon decided that was their true role in life! They married June 22, 1911. They built a comfortable home on Kanaka Creek Road and raised four children (Robert Raymond, Elizabeth "Betty" Jane, Mary Jean, and Patricia Anne) who all graduated from SHS and went on to college.

Ray and Theo were extremely active in community affairs, such as his membership on the school board, and the Masonic Lodge and her involvement in Women's Club, Eastern Star, and the Public Library. Both were involved with school and youth activities. Dad was also granted one of the first honorary memberships to Wauna Lake Club because of his help in acquiring the lake property for them.

While they were not true "pioneers," they did come to Stevenson at a time when both were able to contribute to the development of the beautiful community which it has become.

Theo died in 1965; Ray in 1970. He moved to Portland about two years prior to his death.

Dad always told us kids that “Someday, something wonderful is going to happen to Skamania County.” I truly believe that he is in Heaven today, looking down at your Columbia Gorge Historical Interpretive Center and Museum, and the adjoining beautiful Skamania Lodge, with a great big smile on his face, nodding his head in approval, and saying to Mom: “This is what I was talking about!”

Sincerely,
BETTY SLY KELLER
(Mrs. Freeman Keller)
FREEMAN KELLER