

Stephanie Krieg

Dr. Jean Moule

TCE 408H

11 November 2013

## Research Findings

### Census Data

2010 Census: 0.3% Silverton population Black or African American alone compared with 1.8% of Oregon. 89% of Silverton was white alone, compared with 83.6% of Oregon.

1940 Census: Looked through the entire census record for Silverton in 1940. Every single race slot was "W."

1890: No data found.

1880: County level; Marion county total population 14,576, colored population 27

### Sources

Silverton, Oregon website

- History page <http://www.silverton.or.us/index.aspx?nid=192>.

1800s: Timber and water power draw first settlers.

1846: Milford established with sawmill on Silver Creek.

1854: Milford abandoned and settlement moved to current city location.

1885: Silverton incorporated.

1894: Population around 900.

- Historical Photo Gallery <http://www.silverton.or.us/gallery.aspx?AID=1>

Everyone was white.

Liberal University of Oregon <http://liberaluniversity.org/>

- Silverton in 1894 <http://liberaluniversity.org/luo01slv1894.php>

- Battle of the Abiqua; racism toward native Americans  
<http://liberaluniversity.org/luo01boa.php>

Silverton Historical Society and Museum <http://www.silvertonmuseum.com/index.html>

503.873.7070, open Tuesdays from 9-2 or 3

- “Come by the museum and research family histories, cemetery records, photographs, newspaper articles, and much more...”
- Visited on 10 November 2013. Silverton Country Historical Society President Norman English and member Fred Parkinson were there. They really only knew of the racist past of Oregon as a whole, not specifically Silverton. Fred had a list of Silverton Appeal Tribune article headlines from 1900 on and directed me to the library to look at the microfilm reels. The only one that ended up being somewhat related was about the KKK in 1921 (see printout).

*Images of America: Silverton* book. Looked through whole thing. No blacks.

Interview

- 11/11: Karen Almquist. Lifelong Silverton resident with long family history in the area. She said her father-in-law told her stories about Silverton gangs (Scandinavian Lutherans) fighting with gangs from nearby Mt. Angel (German Catholics). I'm excited to hear her stories even if she doesn't remember anything relating to blacks, because that might support my growing suspicion that Silverton is one of those all-white but non-sundown towns.

[wishing I had picked Grants Pass because my grandfather grew up there and was telling me how there was an unspoken rule that blacks were never allowed to stay the night!]

Norman English—president of Silverton Country Historical Society

Fred Parkinson—member of Silverton Country Historical Society

Home: 503.873.1287

Cell: 503.580.9896

Email: fparkins@wavecable.com

At the Silverton Museum, November 10, 2013

503.873.7070 (usually someone around on Tuesdays from 9-2; call before dropping in)

They had never heard the term “sundown town” and were definitely more knowledgeable about general Silverton history rather than racial history. In fact, they barely knew about Oregon’s exclusionary clause. But they did their best to think of what they might have pertaining to Silverton’s black history. They dug up some books about Oregon history but nothing was really very helpful beyond what I already knew. The most helpful thing was Mr. Parkinson had a document of headlines from the Silverton Appeal/Tribune from 1900 on, corresponding to the microfilms at the library next door. I saw one from August 12, 1921 entitled “GAR Opposes Ku Klux Klan” and thought it might be promising.

I found it on the microfilm at the library and copied it onto my flash drive. It seems promising to me in my growing suspicions that Silverton wasn’t a sundown town, since they seemed to unquestioningly renounce the KKK.

They also recommended the article from the following book:

“The Struggle of Blacks in Oregon.” *Great Moments in Oregon History*. Pages 31-30. Winn, McCormack, Pintarich. 1987. New Oregon Publishers Inc. Print.

OREGON, FRIDAY, AUG. 12, 1921.

# G. A. R. OPPOSES KU KLUX KLAN

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As a part of the work of the Marion County G. A. R. Association held in this city last Thursday the veterans adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved, That the Marion County Veterans' association in regular meeting assembled at Silverton, desires to place on record and make public in the most positive language, its disapproval and condemnation of the movement to revive the infamous Ku Klux Klan organization.

"The history of the lawlessness and violence of the past needs no recital. The murders, lynchings and violence of those days are too well known and President's Grant's stern orders for the repression of its activities are of record.

"No form of secret organization whose members appear in public only in masks and under cover of darkness, pretending to be 100 per cent Americans, can be anything but anarchistic in its real character. The organization deserves and should receive universal condemnation.

"Resolved, That the Marion County Veterans association recommends a counter organization to combat and put out of existence the so called Ku Klux Klan order and all other organizations whose purposes and aims are of a like character."

Officers elected were:

- President—A. B. Huddleston.
- Vice President—Frances Gourlie.
- Secretary—Norma Terwilliger.
- Treasurer—Emma Cobb.
- Marshal—W. H. Folger.

The next meeting of the association will be held at Salem on Thursday December 1. A nice program was given.

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Silverton Library 11.10.2013

Vertical Files

Silverton history up to 1899:

Silverton Country—Mildred Thayer

- Farm labor done by teenagers
- The Battle of the Abiqua in 1847 [from *A History of the Silverton Country*, Down, 1926]

The History of Silverton 4.17.1985

- Settled first by Molalla and Calapooya Indians
- Two wagon trains came in 1845
- Industry mainly farming, but also flour mills, 2 blacksmiths, drugstore, 3 general stores, 1 carding machine, 2 saddle and harness shops, and 2 grist mills.
- Railroad
- Lumber

Silverton History from 1900-1914:

*When Silverton Was Young*—Flora Hoblitt, 1909

- “Silverton may justly be rated as a fair city...It extends a welcoming hand to all who may be looking for a home abounding in such attractive assets.”
- “Know Nothings” in Oregon: first organized anti-slavery element in politics. Secret group. Silverton reportedly a hotspot. Thomas H. Small and Neill Johnson, 2 early-day preachers, strong anti-slavery advocates. Also Davenports, Orange Jacobs, William Porter.
- Civil War. Some southerners would parade the streets shouting “Hurrah for Jeff Davis.” Often resulted in fist fights. Pro-union meetings popular and held in Silverton. Settlement of Germans in Aurora became a center for Union influence. “Outstanding enemy of slavery” in Silverton: William French Eastham, raising Union flag. Robert Scott: meeting at his home resulted in a pro-slavery protest against union flag. Major Joseph Magone said Eastham could raise 1 or 20 flags if he wanted and so no fight ensued.
- “Chinese coolies” did farm labor.

Karen Almquist

11 November 2013

Personal Interview

Silverton was populated mainly by Scandinavian Lutherans.

Giant camps of single men to work as loggers. Formed gangs and fought on Fridays with the Catholic Germans of Mt. Angel.

Norway Street named for all the Norwegian families living there. [Almquist family among them.]

Three Lutheran churches in Silverton. Norwegian church services held until the 60's. They still have traditional Norwegian meals with lefse and everything! [Her mother was Norwegian but she wasn't taught to speak Norwegian as a child. Family very concerned with raising "American" children.]

Hatred toward Catholics. [Her older sister was in love with a Catholic and came home with a Mary figurine and a rosary and her father paced back and forth, holding little Karen in his arms, sobbing. Finally on his deathbed he said he had been visited by Jesus Christ who told him that it didn't matter if you were Catholic or Protestant.]

She is a teacher and only recently has had a few African-American students in the area.

Overall impression:

I'm beginning to really believe that Silverton was one of those towns mentioned in the book with a very specific demographic that became closed off to every other group (154-157).

Scandinavian people settled and all their families came to be with them and they set out to become fully "American." I still don't know, however, if the overwhelmingly white population was so white because they pushed out the blacks or because the blacks just never came. They employed Chinese to do farm work, so they obviously didn't have a huge problem with that racial group, and now there is a very large latino population so it doesn't make sense to me that they would accept those minorities but reject the African-American minority.