

◆Northwest Gay and Lesbian Historian◆

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(from the Woody Johnson papers)

What's new in the Archives?

Several important collections of organizational and personal records were recently acquired by GLAPN. These manuscripts run to approximately twenty linear feet total, and are permanently housed at the Oregon Historical Society where they will be made accessible to scholars and gay and lesbian researchers in the years to come.

GLAPN is presently looking for volunteers to help with the processing and cataloging of the materials which include many interesting artifacts, photographs and ephemera as well. Processing of the materials will include putting them in acid-free containers, while the cataloging will entail filing, sorting and indexing subject matter. Eventually, the catalogue will go online and be accessible to scholars throughout the world.

Included in the gay and lesbian collection presently being amassed at OHS are:

- records of the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon (No on 9); being primarily financial records of the

Physician's memoirs reveal 19th century Lesbian—seventy years after her death

Ray Leonard (1849-1921), the Lebanon, Oregon pioneer who everyone thought was a man

Buried in the Lebanon Pioneer cemetery is the body of yet another Linn County personality who presented herself using a male persona. Joining Dr. Alan L. Hart, is the recently discovered Ray Leonard, a Lebanon shoe cobbler who came to Oregon in 1889 and passed as a man until her secret was revealed in 1911.

Aspects of Leonard's life are briefly mentioned in the recently published autobiography of Dr. Mary Canaga Rowlands, a Lebanon physician who wrote of her years working as a frontier woman doctor in Oregon. She died in 1966, and her great grandnephew, Seattle journalist, F.A. Loomis, published the edited manuscript in 1994.

But Dr. Rowlands was not the only one to take notice of this turn-of-the-century 'passing woman.' In 1991 two genealogists living in Lebanon compiled a history of the early settlers buried in Lebanon's Pioneer cemetery and published a book. In the course of their research, Patricia Dunn and Jeanne Gentry noticed a puzzling discrepancy between Leonard's 1921 newspaper obituary which mentioned that she was a woman, and earlier news accounts which clearly referred to her as "he."

After interviewing local residents who had heard stories about her, they discovered that in fact, Ray Leonard "dressed in overalls, and was thought by

Excerpts from *As Long As Life: The Memoirs of a Frontier Woman Doctor*

by Mary Canaga Rowlands, M.D.,
edited by F.A. Loomis (Steven Pink Press, Seattle, 1995)

...Another unusual character in Lebanon was Ray Leonard who had come to Lebanon many years before with his father. When Ray first came to town he and another man were rivals for a maiden lady who was a large red trumpet. It was said that the two men almost dived over her. Nothing came of the whole affair. One man moved away and Ray ceased to call on the lady. He lived in the back of his shop which became a rendezvous for men of the town who gathered there in the evening to tell stories. Ray went hunting and fishing with these men, but always insisted on sleeping alone. As time passed, he became gray and looked quite old, complained of headaches, and often closed his shop at odd hours. Eventually, he began to wander about town at night and seemed disoriented. People who knew him and found him wandering would take him home. Finally, it became necessary to put him in the state hospital.

It is customary to strip each patient entering the hospital and give them a bath before they are given quarters. The doctor immediately discovered that Ray Leonard, a seventeen-year resident of Lebanon, was a woman. After her secret was out, Ray made a rapid recovery and came back to Lebanon to live the rest of her life.

The authorities made her wear dresses, but she confided to her friends that she wore pants below her dress because her legs got cold. She told people that she was the oldest daughter in a large New England family and had grown up helping her father in the shop. After consulting her father they agreed she would do best to wear men's clothing.

Ray was quiet and industrious, and not given to controversy in the community. Back from the system she frequented the Christian Science Church, though always sent for me when she was ill. She always remarked, "Christian Science is all right when I'm well, but it ain't worth a damn when I'm sick."

Ray looked for love like a man to me then as a woman. She would say, "Look at me, Dr. Rowlands, do you think I have one feminine feature?" I had to admit that she certainly looked like a man.

Meanwhile Ray's shop became popular to the men who formerly gathered there to tell tales. The doctor who cared for her all these years ceased the street to keep from speaking to her. And the men of sense never ceased to ask the doctor why he had kept Ray's sex a secret. Men everywhere have their little jokes. When people yelled into the wooden lady's ear trumpet that her old boss was needed, a woman, her remark was, "Why the hell should I?"

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Commitment to the insane asylum uncovered her secret...

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most who knew her, including the census taker, to be a man."

Additional research has turned up a 1911 insane asylum record which confirms Dr. Rowlands' account. Ray Leonard was committed to the hospital in September of that year and was listed among the female entries in the records at the Oregon State Archives in Salem.

The record also notes that a friend, Ed Langtree "will furnish clothes." Upon her discharge, the word "(Miss)" was added next to her name in the records.

Of her early life not much is known beyond what Dunn and Gentry published about her in their book, *Lebanon Pioneer Cemetery: The End of the Trail*, (1991, published by the City of Lebanon).

She was born in Bath, Maine on Feb. 14, 1849, one of eight children of Joseph Leonard, a boot and shoe-maker. She accompanied her father to Philadelphia in 1874 where they spent eleven years in the shoe trade. In 1885 the two moved west to Nevada where they remained for four years, thence coming to Coos County, "from which after a residence of six months they arrived in Lebanon."

Upon her father's death, the

grieving "son" published the following notice in the town newspaper, the *Lebanon Express* on March 2, 1894:

"Ray Leonard would hereby inform the general public that the death of his father has made no change in his business as boot and shoemaker. Thankful for the liberal patronage given him in the past, he notifies the public that he is still to be found at the old stand, doing honest and faithful work at "hard times" prices."

"I hereby tender most hearty thanks to and express my appreciation of the many friends who so tenderly and attentively waited upon my worthy father during his long and fatal sickness, and so assisted and sympathized with me in laying his remains away in the silent tomb. Being the only member of a large but widely scattered family that could be with my father, and upon whom the responsibility rested of caring for him in his old age and final sickness in a community where, because of our short residence, we might be regarded as strangers, and among a people upon whom we had no special claims, such watchfulness and kind services were all the more appreciated....

—Ray Leonard"

More Lesbian and Gay Archive Sources on the World Wide Web

- Internet web sites that we recommend:
- ⇒ The Lesbian History Project (University of Southern California) with outstanding links to other sources:
<http://www-uh.usc.edu/~letter/main.html>
 - ⇒ The History of Gays and Lesbians at Stanford University:
<http://www-ehand.stanford.edu/group/QR/History>
 - ⇒ The Human Sexuality Collection at Cornell University:
<http://hmo-www.library.cornell.edu/hmo-humsex.html>

Win !!!

An all Leather
Coach Embassy Briefcase
Retail value \$ 374

Stop by our booth at Waterfront Park
to buy your raffle tickets
Saturday, June 22, 1996

"Don't throw it out!"

"When in doubt, don't throw it out," is a good maxim for queer history collectors. Many of the things we pick up today will become the historical artifacts of tomorrow. Among them are rainbow, pink triangle, and lambda items, political buttons, bumper stickers, and flyers announcing events and community meetings.

Presently the archives is looking for the following items to add to its collection:

- Just Out, issues before Sept. 1992
- Alternative Connection, issues before August, 1992
- Cityweek (any issues)
- Lavender Network, issues before Sept. 1992
- photographs of gay and lesbian bar interiors

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PERSONAL AND MEDICAL HISTORY OF <i>Leonard Ray</i>			
Residence	<i>Lebanon, Oregon</i>	Race	<i>White</i>
Born	<i>September 14, 1849</i>	Marriage	<i>None</i>
Place of Birth	<i>Maine</i>	Religion	<i>Protestant</i>
Occupation	<i>Shoemaker</i>	Civil Condition	<i>Married</i>
Height	<i>5' 6"</i>	Contracted by	<i>J. D. Dunn</i>
Weight	<i>125</i>	Address of Friends	<i>Ed Langtree</i>
Color of Hair	<i>Light</i>		<i>Lebanon, N</i>
Color of Eyes	<i>Light</i>		<i>well furnished</i>
Age	<i>62 years</i>		
<p><i>"Delusions changeable"</i> <i>"Hallucinations and illusions of sight and hearing; hearing people trying to get into room"</i> <i>"Peculiar, disturbed to some extent"</i></p>			

Ray Leonard's insane asylum entry dated September 25, 1911, lists her as being a "widower" although no information is known regarding any wives.

(Oregon State Archives, Records of the State Hospital, Vol. 5B, Pg. 116)

June 17th at LaLUNA

Fundraiser to benefit NW Archives During Gay Pride Week in Portland

Queer Night will host a fundraising event for the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest on Monday, June 17th at LaLUNA nightclub, 215 S.E. Ninth St., Portland.

A portion of the proceeds collected at the door will go toward the

support of GLAPN's work in the community, documenting and preserving local gay, lesbian, and transgender history.

Queer Night is open to all ages, features contemporary music, dancing and mayhem until the wee hours of the morning.



Chet Orloff, Executive Director of the Oregon Historical Society, and Holly Hart and John Wilkinson, founders of the Portland Gay Liberation Front at the 25th anniversary ceremony held on March 13, 1995, recognizing the historic significance of the Centenary Wilbur Methodist Church. The church which housed the Ninth Street East Coffeehouse was the site of the first meeting of the PGLF which convened on March 10, 1970. The building is now the home of LaLuna, a nightclub which will host a fundraising event for the Gay and Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest on the evening of June 17th. (Photo by Linda Kuewer)

Collectibles we are seeking...

- Second Foundation flyers, records,
- *NW Fountain* (issues from 1979 to complete our collection)
- any Imperial Sovereign Rose Court memorabilia, photographs, programs, flyers, etc.
- any memorabilia, photographs, programs, relating to the National Women's Softball championship team, the "Irv Lind Florists"
- Letters, photographs from personal collections of gay men, lesbians or transsexuals who lived in Oregon, Washington or Idaho
- Cascade A.I.D.S. Project, any printed materials such as safe-sex posters, pamphlets, condoms, especially from the period 1985-1990.
- any local playbills from gay and lesbian theatre productions

New Acquisitions

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statewide organization that helped to defeat Measure 9 in 1992

- records of **Dignity/Portland**; 1979-1995, approximately four linear ft.
- records of **ACT-UP** of the Columbia/Willamette Valley and the Radical Activists Truth Squad (R.A.T.S.), 1990-1992, including t-shirts, ephemera, posters from the demonstration against Pres. George Bush in 1990
- a two-year run of **R.F.D.** (a rural gay literary magazine published in Wolf Creek, Oregon, 1974-1975)
- **Roger Troen** gay liberation collection; 1971-1979, periodicals, correspondence and national and local ephemera, approximately three linear ft.
- **Swordlow** collection; 1971-73, thirty-eight reel to reel tape recordings of the early gay radio program "Homophile Half Hour" including interviews with local gay activists, an eye witness account of Stonewall, an early transsexual, Sen. Wayne Morris, and Second Foundation (an early gay rights organization) leaders.
- **Woody Johnson** papers, 1977-1993, mostly photographs of Johnson, a.k.a. "Lady Elaine Peacock," programs of the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court coronation balls, a few letters.
- **Sara Cook** oral history collection, cassette recordings of forty-four lesbian and feminist activists in Oregon from 1978.
- **Portland Gay Men's Chorus** programs, 1982-1996, 38 items plus the 1985 original cast recording of "Zillions or How We Paid off the National Debt" by Tom Simonds.

Volunteers interested in assisting can contact either Tom Cook at (503) [redacted] (for collecting activities), or Todd Welch (processing and cataloging) Project Archivist at the Oregon History Center (503) [redacted]

Yes! I would like to help

Membership includes subscription to the quarterly newsletter, *Northwest Gay and Lesbian Historian*, and since GLAPN is non-profit, your donation is tax deductible.

- _____ Individual membership (\$25 per year)
- _____ Family membership (\$35 per year)
- _____ Associate membership (please accept my donation of
\$ _____)
- _____ Patron membership (\$100 per year)
- _____ I would like information on making a will or trust
- _____ I have materials to donate to the Archives' collection

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

Mission Statement

We believe knowledge is key to dispelling homophobia. The archives is committed to educating the public about gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and dismantling the negative myths which lead to misunderstanding and persecution.

As a historical society we are committed to acquiring, preserving and disseminating materials that embody the culture and history of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals.

As an archives we work with existing institutions as repositories for the records, papers, photographs and other relics of lesbian and gay life, focusing primarily in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and the Pacific Northwest.

As a cultural society, we make these collections active and accessible to the public through exhibits, lectures, workshops, video and film, and other special events.

The Archives' collection and programming policies reflect the diversity and rich history of the lesbian, gay and transgender community, and is committed to the sound management of its resources.

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