

JUNE'S GARDEN

Continued from last month's series on the history of Cannon Beach "Village of Flowers."

"Barry McKay built the Norway Cottage, a two-story place, between Monroe and Jackson Street east of Hemlock. The 'Honeysuckle Lodge,' on Monroe Street, was a bower with sweet smelling flowers."

Quoted from "Memories of Cannon Beach" by Dora Hall Hardie. The Hardies came to Cannon Beach in 1919 and lived here for 30 years.

Harold (also known as Barry) McKay and his wife came here in the early 1900's. Their home, which was made of logs, later burned down; but "Honeysuckle Lodge," which they built, is still there; however, the sweet smelling flower garden is gone. The McKays rented the lodge to honeymooners, and Helen Thurman's parents honeymooned there in 1919.

In 1928, Thurman's grandparents built a summer cabin two or three doors east of the lodge on Monroe Street and as a child when she visited her grandparents she remembers Mrs. McKay's garden tea parties. She enjoyed watching the ladies dressed in their finery, hats, gloves and pretty dresses. She told of McKay's garden which featured a fish pond with bridge and stepping stones imprinted with leaves that led through flower beds.

During the Depression, in the late 20's and early 30's, many gardeners produced more vegetables than flowers, to supplement their diet of seafood. Regardless of hard times, in 1927 a group of ladies formed a club to start a library, street lighting, garbage disposal, better roads. On August 14, 1928, the Cannon Beach Garden Club was organized. The Garden Club's purpose was to exchange plants and learn more about gardening in coastal weather. The meetings were held at the different women's homes.

In 1931 when the Presbyterian Church was built, the Garden Club decided to hold flower shows in the church. The flower shows became an annual affair. The club's members sold plants collected from their gardens and gave prizes for the most perfect flowers and vegetables. Some brought flower arrangements, and later they conducted tours of gardens throughout the town.

I was told of a garden of dahlias that were raised on the north side of Ecola Creek, and hanging begonias grown by a woman who lived on Ecola Road. During that time, clippings of roses from the valley were planted here and some of those original plants, particularly the rambler varieties, have thrived through the years.

Early pictures of downtown Cannon Beach show few flowers around the commercial buildings. Boardwalks, drifting sand banks, flooding, swampy areas, left little soil for flower beautification. Other than a few pots of flowers in the windows of the stores or straggly, hardier shrubs, most of the gardens were in private homes only.

In 1939, fierce winds, drenching rains and raging surf tore away seafront gardens of Cannon Beach cottages. In 1945, Archibald and Evangeline McNeil bought the property

then-called the Cannon Beach Hotel (formerly "Hotel Bill"), and turned it into the Conference Center. Heather Goodenough, their daughter, told me her mother, Evangeline, was quite a gardener. Mrs. McNeil was so enthusiastic to have many flowered beds around the hotel and other buildings that she would be up at 5:00 A.M. tending to her garden before her busy day started as director of the Conference Center. Goodenough said her mother used vegetable scraps and other humus to enrich the soil, which produced an array of healthy plants that bloomed throughout the summer ... and that her grandmother, Matilda Duff, who came to live here from northern Ireland, also gardened with her mother.

Some of the original buildings are no longer there. The Conference Center has grown to include many more properties. Now, decades later, there is a full-time groundskeeper, Bill Chaftin, with help from many volunteers. All year long the Conference Center grounds are landscaped with seasonal flowers. Louise Schaer, one of the volunteers, who had worked for years as a floral arranger at Portland's Tommy Luke Flower Shop, is known for her beautiful arrangements displayed in the Conference Center buildings. In the spring, hundreds of bulbs that were planted in the fall bloom throughout the garden. Regardless of spring weather, the hundreds of yellow daffodil blooms at the entrance of the grounds proclaim another stormy coastal winter has passed.

Some of the above information is from the book, *Cannon Beach, A Place By the Sea*, by Terence O'Donnell, and from writings by Dora Hall Hardie.

If you have any garden memories of these long-ago days in Cannon Beach, I'd love to hear about them and add them into these columns. *June's Garden*, P. O. Box 74, Cannon Beach, OR 97110.

The country station plays soft, but there's nothing, really nothing to turn off.



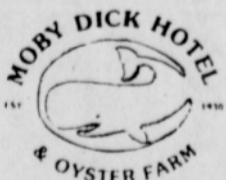
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