



Photos courtesy of John Northe

**A photo of Dr. Toivo Forsstrom in 1945.**

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can be found at the Astoria Library, Clatsop County Historical Society and Ancestry.com.

### **U.S. federal census**

The census is taken every 10 years in the United States. These records date back to 1790. Be aware the year 1890 is missing for most of the country. Censuses are generally searchable on online genealogy websites. You can browse by ward number or enumeration district. Census data provides a snapshot of data on people living at an address. Keep in mind census data is sometimes incorrect.

### **Oral history**

You can track living descendants of former owners. For me, this was the most rewarding. I found Dr. Forsstrom's step-grandchildren by searching on the internet and following up on his 1945 newspaper obituary information through internet searches.

I contacted and met them! We took them

on a tour through the house and they have gifted us with family photos and artifacts. I treasure their stories.

The Forsstrom step-grandson toured the house in 2019. It was his first time in the house since about 1950. He had nice memories of his grandmother, Nelma Forsstrom! I got fabulous descriptions of the decor from a child's perspective. He especially liked playing on the mahogany grand staircase and vividly recalled the old brass dust corners.

### **Historic register summaries**

Your home might be on a historic register or inventory. If one exists for your property, it can be obtained from your local jurisdiction or the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. Keep in mind this is a secondary source and may contain errors.

### **Newspapers**

The best free website for digitized searchable Oregon newspapers is Historic Oregon Newspapers by the University of Oregon. The Astoria Library has a card catalog index that includes many years of old



**The author was able to track down the living descents of former inhabitants of her home, who gifted her copies of family photos. This photo is of Nelma Matson Northe Forrstrom Anderson and her grandson, John Northe.**

local newspapers. Paid newspaper archive subscription sites include newspapers.com and genealogybank.com, and you can search by surname, surname variants and street address. You will find obituaries, land transactions, news, society page and general gossip.

The Clatsop County Historical Society has an amazing online resource. Visit AstoriaMuseums.org, then click "explore" on the menu and scroll down to "Research and Collections." You can choose to search the internet archive or photograph collection.

I found additional photographs, more importantly, memoirs that mentioned former owners. It's a fantastic local research

tool and makes the collection very accessible to the casual researcher. It's well done and greatly appreciated.

Email me your best research finds. I can do a column on additional research tips if there is interest. Next month, I will discuss old house styles common to the North Coast. It's important information to understand since it drives choices in decor, preservation, restoration and renovation.

*Lauri Serafin is the owner of the Forsstrom House, built in 1914 in Astoria's Shively-McClure Historic District. She can be contacted at Forsstromhouse@gmail.com. You can find more details about her restoration work at theforsstromhouse.com*