

Nuggets of History

Washing up Cottage Grove:

The Nesmith Washer

On April 9, 1909, *The Cottage Grove Leader* newspaper reported that Howard Beagle, Oregon

manufacturer and general agent for the Nesmith Washer, had an expert workman employed at his washing machine company. Mr. Beagle claimed his washer was the best and cheapest on the market and he declared every purchaser was delighted with the machine. Two of the machine's features were ease of operation and preservation of clothing. Mr. Beagle even held a patent for the washer design.

Who Was A.H. Beagle?

According to the 1900 Census, Howard Beagle was born in October 1871 in Illinois, where he worked as a butcher along with his father. By October 1900, Howard, whose full name was Arthur Howard Beagle, had come west to Cottage Grove where he married Annie Harms at the home of J.W. Harms. The couple was married by minister W.V. McGee.

Ten years later, according to the 1910 Census, Arthur Beagle was living on Tennessee Avenue with Annie and their three sons, Claire, John and Bernard.

Where was the Nesmith Washing Machine Factory?

Piecing together the exact location of buildings from Cottage Grove's past requires specialized knowledge and a fair amount of sleuthing. According to the *Eugene Guard*, in March 1909, Mr. Beagle was erecting a building on his residential lot on the northeast corner of what was then Locust Street and East 4th Street.

Contributed by the Cottage Grove Museum Researcher: Joanne Skelton

The 1910, Lane County Directory lists Mr. Beagle's occupation as "washing machine manufacturer." His place of business was on the east side of 4th St, one building south on what was Tennessee Avenue.

These street names seem strange to today's residents because Cottage Grove did not have house numbers until 1912, when most of the street names were changed to those we recognize today.

In our estimation, Mr. Beagle's house was at present day 610 Adams St, and his Nesmith Washing Machine factory was probably the building on the east side of what is now 6th Street, but was then 4th Street.

Why the name Nesmith?

At the time Mr. Beagle was starting his washing machine company, Cottage Grove was involved in an effort to create a new county called Nesmith County. Cottage Grove was to be the county seat. This effort was ultimately unsuccessful, but Mr. Beagle was apparently confident enough of success to use the name for his washing machine manufacturing company.

Selling the Nesmith Washer

An article from the May 14, 1909 *Cottage Grove Leader* goes into detail about the features of the Nesmith Washer and how it was marketed to Cottage Grove housewives. Mr. Beagle claimed his washer was unique because, "you can sit down and wash with perfect ease."

He said you could do a load of laundry in 2 - 4 minutes and claimed the shortened washing time helped clothes last longer because the clothes were in

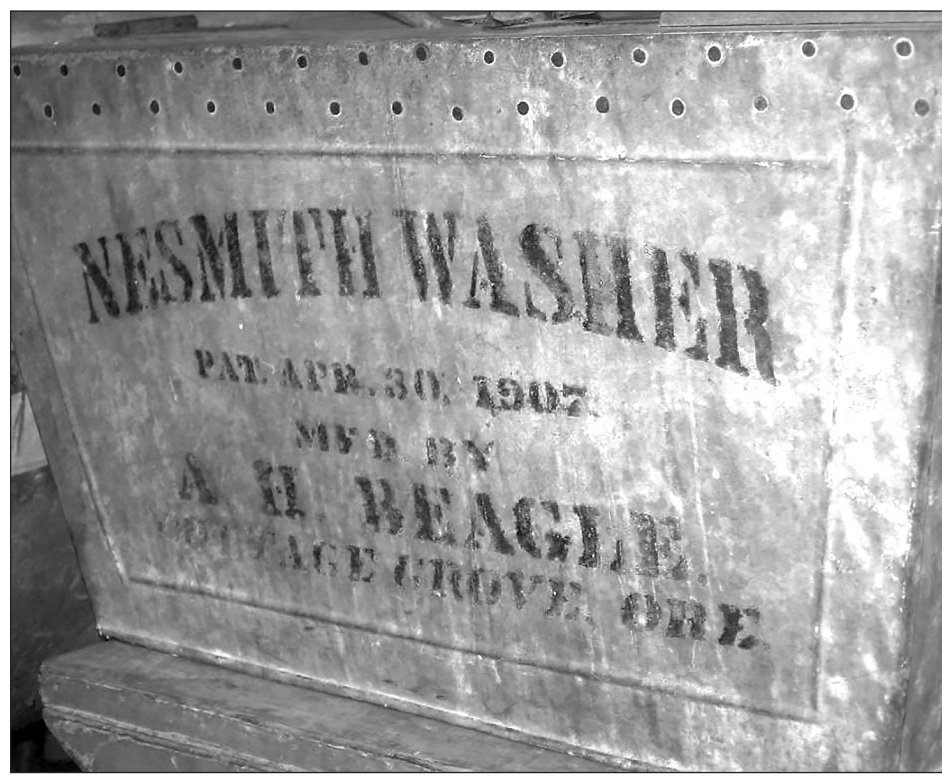


PHOTO COURTESY OF COTTAGE GROVE MUSEUM

The Nesmith Washer, developed by patent holder Howard Beagle, was touted as cheaper, easier to use and better at preserving clothing. A surviving washer can be found on display as part of the Cottage Grove Museum's "Spring Cleaning" exhibit.

hot water for less time.

Mr. Beagle went further, offering to come to your house on washing day and do your washing for you "free of charge".

He continued, "What we want is the candid opinion of the housewives as to the value of our washers. You will not be solicited to buy a machine unless you are interested after seeing its work. All we ask is a trial, and if you have any neighbors that are interested, that you will kindly invite them over to see the washer work and criticise (sic) it."

Did any Nesmith Washers Survive?

Yes! While we do not know how many Nesmith Washers were ultimately sold, a surviving Nesmith Washer is part of the Cottage Grove Museum's "Spring Cleaning" exhibit in the museum's main building.

Take the opportunity to visit the museum to see the Nesmith Washer along with hundreds of other interesting items from Cottage Grove's past.

The Cottage Grove Museum is located at the corner of Birch and H St., in the historic Northwest Neighborhood. The museum is open Saturday and Sunday from 1 - 4 p.m. or by special arrangement.

For more information about the Cottage Grove Museum, see the museum's website at www.cottagegrovemuseum.com.

The Cottage Grove Sentinel is accepting history articles as part of its "Nuggets of History" series, a monthly snapshot into the colorful history of the Cottage Grove area. If you have an idea for a story or would like to submit one, contact the editor at dsherwood@cgsentinel.com or call The Sentinel office at 541-942-3328. Submissions in Word document form are preferred.

Deadline for submissions is every Monday by noon.

Email: DSHERWOOD@CGSENTINEL.COM.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Are you ready?

3 steps to creating a family communication emergency plan

Chaos can quickly set in when natural disasters strike. People who are in the eye of the storm or those with loved ones who are potentially in danger may spend hours, if not days, trying to get in touch with friends and family to determine if everyone is alright. However temporary it may be, the period between a storm touching down and speaking with loved ones can be agonizing. But there is a way to facilitate communication with loved ones during a natural disaster, and all it takes is some simple planning.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, often referred to as FEMA, notes that people need to send and receive information from their families during disasters. Unfortunately, there's no guarantee that communication networks like mobile phones and computers will be reliable during disasters, when electricity may be interrupted and mobile towers might be compromised. As a result, it's imperative that people develop communication plans with their families so they can reach one another in the wake of natural disasters. Three simple steps can help families as they begin devising their emergency communication plans.

1. Collect all necessary information.

Gather and jot down the names and contact information of all family members, making sure to create a paper copy that will be accessible whether the electricity or mobile tower goes out or not. Include names, phone numbers and addresses of nearby friends and family members, as well as anyone who lives close enough to potentially offer temporary shelter should your home be damaged or pose a threat. Include the names, phone numbers and addresses of medical facilities, doctors, schools, or service providers on the list as well. Elderly men and women can include the names of all medications they take next to the names of the doctors who prescribed them.

2. Distribute the copies.

Make copies of your list and distribute them to everyone in your family, including people who do not live close. Faraway relatives can use the list to try to find you should they be unable to communicate with you in the wake of a disaster. Make sure everyone in your home keeps a printed copy of the list on them at all times, whether it's in a backpack, purse or wallet. FEMA notes that those who complete their family communication plan online can print their plans onto wallet-sized cards by visiting ready.gov/make-a-plan.

Keep a copy of the list in a central location in your home as well, such as on the refrigerator.

3. Practice your plan.

FEMA advises holding regular household meetings where families can go over their contact information and practice what to do should they need to communicate with one another during an emergency. Planning is an essential component of disaster preparedness that can save lives and help families find one another in the wake of emergencies.



PUT TOGETHER A PLAN

Make sure all the pieces are in place to render you and your family prepared in the event of a natural disaster.

- Listen to radio or television newscasts for the latest weather information, and follow all evacuation directions and suggestions.
- Keep a stock of non-perishable food items as well as bottled water on hand inside your home.
- Keep a 72 Hour Kit on hand inside your home that is easy to get to in the event of a disaster.

For more information and tips on disaster response and preparedness, contact your local emergency services center.

South Lane Fire & Rescue • 233 Harrison Ave, Cottage Grove 541-942-4493 • 55 South 1st Street, Creswell 541-895-2506



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