

Myra Beeler, Laura Frye, Jerry Frye, Jane Romig, and Peggy Alexander Interview on the Gay Nineties and Barbershop Ballad Contest

Recorded July 11, 2025 at the Forest Grove United Church of Christ

Interviewer: Elle Griego, History and French undergraduate student at Pacific University

Note on the text: This transcript was made through AI in 2025 with manual corrections. We recommend checking this text against the audio recording before quoting the speakers, as it may contain errors.

Elle Griego 0:01

All right. Greetings, I'm Elle Griego behind the camera, and I'm here interviewing five individuals today. We are at the United Church of Christ here in Forest Grove, Oregon, on Friday, July 11, 2025. I will be asking them about their memories and thoughts surrounding the Gay Nineties Festival and the barbershop ballad contest and how Forest Grove has changed over the years. Thank you so much for being here with me today. Could we start by going around the room just stating your name for now? We'll start here.

Myra Beeler 0:33

Myra Beeler.

Laura Frye 0:35

Laura Frye.

Jerry Frye 0:37

Jerry Frye.

Jane Romig 0:39

Jane Romig.

Peggy Alexander 0:40

Peggy Alexander.

Elle Griego 0:41

Thank you so much for being here today. So I would like to first start at the beginning of all your lives outside of the context of the Gay Nineties, how you grew up in Forest Grove in general, and how you all know each other, how you met. Are you all from Forest Grove, for example? And we could start around the room, and the conversation, I think, will become more natural. We could start here.

Myra Beeler 1:09

Well, I moved to Forest Grove when I was six, three weeks after I started first grade. And grew up here and went to Pacific University, but I've lived in Hillsboro since a year after I got married. But Forest Grove was a nice little town that the University of course, was the center of activity very much. My dad was a professor there, and then the church here was the other thing, as far as my growing up was concerned, that a lot of activities were taking place there.

Elle Griego 1:53

Yeah. And how old are you, or what year were you born?

Myra Beeler 1:57

I was born in 1939, [Griego: All right] and so I've been here since 1946.

Elle Griego 2:04

Wow. That's interesting. That's also like around the first year that they started up the contest, or when they they, I think they started it unofficially, and then the next year, 1947 was and they had the first barbershop ballad contest. But so that's interesting. You've been here since the very, very beginning.

Myra Beeler 2:23

And my dad was a Gleeman, so they sponsored it all and organized it all.

Elle Griego 2:28

What was his name?

Myra Beeler 2:30

Harold Schimke.

Elle Griego 2:32

Good to know.

Myra Beeler 2:33

Want to know how to spell it?

Elle Griego 2:35

Oh, well, can ask you after. Thank you so much. And then...?

Laura Frye 2:43

I came to Forest Grove to go to Pacific University. I was 17 at the time, and I was from Central Washington. And what I really noticed on that first Sunday afternoon, when my mother left to return home, was all of the trees, as I grew up where sagebrush was more my neighbor than trees, and I had this feeling that I'll never be able to see the sky. I certainly got over that quickly, because the trees on campus became just such a comfort and part of the joy of being here. So my time at Pacific University was a great learning experience. A lot of growth. I made wonderful lifelong friends. Appreciated the staff, the professors, met my husband, Gerry, and so I've always been happy that I came to Forest Grove. The Gay Nineties celebrations became a yearly part of our lives for many years, for many decades.

Elle Griego 3:56

Yeah. And could you remind me again, what year did you move here? What year were you born?

Laura Frye 4:01

I was born in 1943. I came here in 1961, and I still live here. After I came here in 1961, I've never lived any place else.

Elle Griego 4:14

Yeah. Oh, wow. And how did you and your husband meet?

Laura Frye 4:20

Where we sang in the Pacific Singers together, and we met in choir.

Elle Griego 4:26

I see. And is everyone here a Pacific graduate? I'm curious. Not everyone. All right, thank you. And then you?

Jerry Frye 4:35

My turn. Well, I was born in Gaston, 1938, and I started school in Portland school district schools and came to Cornelius, where I started their second grade. And eventually came to Forest Grove Junior High, left, went down to Klamath Falls. Came back up, started Pacific University, where I met Laura in 1957. I had a business here in town, Frye's Action Athletics started, but before that, this little building up here, five buildings, used to be where I started my business. Had a screen printing and made t-shirts for teams and that kind of thing, uniforms for local high school teams and college teams and local fraternities.

Elle Griego 5:37

Yeah. I see. Did you start that business then? Or did you buy it? [Frye: Yes.] Oh, how interesting. And what year did you retire?

Laura Frye 5:46

We started the business in 1975 and retired, sold the business -- the business is still in existence, but sold it to Kyle Kobashigawa in 2004.

Elle Griego 6:01

How neat. Well, I'll have a lot of questions concerning, because I know like the parade was a chance for businesses to get involved in the community. So we'll get back to you and your business. And I'm very curious how you participated. And then you?

Jane Romig 6:17

Hi. Yeah, I'm Jane. I was born here in Forest Grove, 1941, and my father was a businessman. He had the movie theaters and the Tip Top, where the printing shop is now printing on Pacific Avenue. [Griego: Really?] Yeah. I grew up popping popcorn for the theaters, peeling potatoes in the kitchen for the restaurant. But I did not go to Pacific. I was a townie, and I wanted to go elsewhere, and so I went to University of Oregon, and really did not go back to live in Forest Grove until 2001.

Elle Griego 7:00

I see. And what year did you say were you born? [Romig: '41.] '41, all right, that's good to know. And then - so you said the theaters in town. So there's the one that is the Theater in the Grove...

Jane Romig 7:11

Theatre in the Grove, and then one that is for sale now, the Forest.

Elle Griego 7:14

Yeah, I'm curious, just real quick, how did the Tip Top theater end up closing down and becoming Theater in the Grove?

Jane Romig 7:26

After my father passed away, they had quit showing movies there, and the little theater group was interested in purchasing it, and so they purchased it over time. And, yeah, I'm glad it's still, you know, fulfilling a function in town. I used to sell candy for them.

Elle Griego 7:49

Yeah, no, it's really a gem in our community. I'm really grateful that it still exists as a theater, maybe not movies, but it's still, you know, with the plays, it's just a wonderful asset to our community.

Jane Romig 8:01

I played in the pit orchestra there a few times.

Elle Griego 8:03

Wow. Well, thank you. And you Peggy?

Peggy Alexander 8:08

Yes, I'm Peggy Alexander. I was born in South Dakota, but we moved to Forest Grove when I was about three because my dad also was a professor at Pacific University. And so then I grew up in Forest Grove, went through all the school years here, including Pacific, and met my husband there at Pacific, and then he was a California boy, so I turned into a Californian for over 50 years, but because our daughters both were here and had families, we bought a house here in 2011 so we came up in the summertime from Santa, Barbara. And then this last June, a year ago, 2024, I decided it was time to just move up here permanently. And I remember Gay Nineties adventures as a child in school, in first grade, finding out that, coming home from lunch and realizing that, "Oh, all those girls have long skirts on today, Mom. What's happening? And the boys have mustaches, and... what is this?" And she knew right away what was going on. And she ran upstairs and got a skirt from my sister, who was 11 years older than me, and put it on me. And I went back to school, and strutted my stuff and was happy as a clam ever since. [Alexander laughs.]

Elle Griego 9:34

Yeah, I've seen those old photos of the school children like, it's super, super, super interesting.

Peggy Alexander 9:39

I love that part.

Elle Griego 9:41

Yeah. And what year were you born?

Peggy Alexander 9:42

I was born in 1941.

Elle Griego 9:44

I see. Thank you. Let me situate -- I guess. What time you guys were all here. And so, how did you all meet? How did you all become friends? [Multiple individuals answer: Church.]

Myra Beeler 9:54

Well, the three of us grew up together in this church.

Peggy Alexander 9:59

And Myra and I picked berries -- your family and my mom and my... we picked strawberries together. [Myra: Yeah.]

Jane Romig 10:07

I think I picked with your family a time or two.

Myra Beeler 10:09

Way early on, and your mom came, and she wore rubber clothes.

Peggy Alexander 10:14

And Jane and I were in the same class all year long, [Romig: Yeah, uh-huh.] because we were the same age.

Laura Frye 10:21

Did you go to Central?

Jane Romig 10:22

And we were in the same room because it was always by alphabet.

Peggy Alexander 10:25

Yes. Well, I didn't realize it was by alphabet. [Romig: Oh, yes.]

Myra Beeler 10:29

I started at Central. But then when they built Harvey Clark, we had moved out to Rosearden Drive, and so I was in the Harvey Clark, just fourth grade, fifth grade, then back together. Anyway, I was a year ahead in school. I was just barely 1939, it was December of 1939, so I was only a year ahead of them in school.

Laura Frye 10:57

And I met Peggy and Myra -- first we all sang in the Pacific Singers. And then I pledged a sorority that Myra and Peggy were in, the Theta Nu Alpha, the sorority at Pacific University.

Elle Griego 11:10

Oh, you said Theta Nu Alpha? That's the one I'm in. [Several chime in with excitement.]

Laura Frye 11:16

Well, stand up and sing the Theta song!

Jerry Frye 11:19

I'm a Gamma, I could sing the Gamma song.

Laura Frye 11:21
Our best to you!

Elle Griego 11:22
Wow, that's super cool.

Laura Frye 11:28
Then Peggy and Myra were out of the community for a while, but I knew Jane because her mother was active here, and she married a fraternity brother of Jerry's, and we were actually married on the very same day. But Jane was married here in this sanctuary, and Jerry and I were married in Sunnyside Washington.

Peggy Alexander 11:53
I was married here too.

Myra Beeler 11:55
I was married in the old sanctuary.

Elle Griego 11:59
Yeah, so this church, I know the building has changed. Is it the second version of this building since you've been here? Well, not total, but before, since you've been... [Beeler: Since we've been here, yeah]. The second or so?

Laura Frye 12:16
1977, is that correct? I think that's right. We watched it go down because our first store was across it, and so the morning that they took the wrecking ball to it...

Elle Griego 12:27
Oh wow. And then why did they do that? Was it just an old, unsafe building?

Jane Romig 12:31
It was a brown brick building

Laura Frye 12:32
It was unable to be made accessible.

Myra Beeler 12:39
You had to go upstairs to get upstairs or downstairs, to get anywhere in the church.

Laura Frye 12:47
But Pacific -- just to solidify the association between the university and the church -- we were not able to worship here because we didn't have a building for at least a year. It might have been two years, and I was choir director at the time, and we had to meet in -- we met in Washburn Hall, in the multipurpose room. They gave us a place to store our choir robes, and... can't remember where we rehearsed... Oh, I do! Our education building, which is the wing over here, we could rehearse in the education wing. But our robes and

all of our Sundays were at the university, and we met there regularly on Sundays.

Elle Griego 13:37

Yeah. Was there a chapel then at Pacific as well?

Laura Frye 13:42

Oh, you mean the old chapel, of course, it's been there since 18... Old College Hall. But it wasn't large enough for the congregation.

Elle Griego 13:50

I see, so at that time... I know at Pacific, in Marsh Hall, before the fire [Laura Frye: Oh, that chapel.] Yeah, there was that. And I wasn't sure if... was that the chapel for students? Or did they come here?

Peggy Alexander 14:04

When I was in college, that was the chapel.

Laura Frye 14:08

But it wasn't the same kind of feeling as a chapel, it was like... because remember how high the ceilings were? [Alexander: Yeah.] They were, what, 24 foot...?

Peggy Alexander 14:13

It was the second floor, and there was a third floor above it that we had to climb up for the choir practice every four days.

Laura Frye 14:20

Yes, fourth floor, we had to... no elevator. [Alexander: Right.] Perfect. It was called the chapel, and what was required in those days was every week you had to attend what they called chapel. But it was like a lecture. I don't remember it having -- in my day, I don't remember having a worship part at the part that we had to go on. I think it was Thursday mornings or Tuesday mornings or something. And everybody went, it was like a lecture.

Myra Beeler 14:53

I think freshmen were the only ones who were required to go.

Laura Frye 14:57

I can tell you that I know the story. It was. You had to check off, because Barney Howard didn't get to graduate with his class, because it was one credit. Somehow he didn't get, they didn't get his name checked off from a chapel... you were required to go. You had to have a certain number per semester, which was different going to chapel in Brighton was different than going to chapel in Old College Hall, which was voluntary. Remember, we had the chapel choir. Did you ever sing in the chapel choir? [Beeler: No.] With Mr. Greenfield? Did you? [Alexander: No, no, I didn't.]

Myra Beeler 15:45

Probably because we're not music majors.

Laura Frye 15:45

You didn't have to be music majors.

Elle Griego 15:45

So was the Pacific Singers related to the church here... or was it...?

Laura Frye 15:51

It's like what the chorale is now.

Elle Griego 15:54

I see. And was that involved in the -- did you participate in the Gay Nineties festival at all with the Pacific Singers? [Multiple individuals collectively respond "No."]

Jerry Frye 16:04

I don't think so.

Peggy Alexander 16:05

I did. I ushered in all of the contests that were held, but when I was in high school and college, I just wanted to listen to the music.

Laura Frye 16:14

And the service organization provided... what did they call it? For the parades, you know, check in points for the parades and serving coffee to them... the service organization, the sororities and the Boxerettes, which was the honorarium at that time in the nights. We did things, but somebody told you what to do, and you reported it, whatever. Eight o'clock in the morning on Saturday morning, and you did your job, did whatever it was, and wore whatever emblem it was, right?

Elle Griego 16:54

I see. As Pacific students, were you, would you say, equally as involved as other Forest Grove Community members? Did you feel at all almost separate from the Forest Grove Community? Or when the Gay Nineties festival came around, were you just just as involved as everyone else? Was it this element that, "Oh, the Gay Nineties, that's for kids," or anything like that? Or was it for everyone?

Peggy Alexander 17:21

I think it was for everyone. And Pacific students could be involved as much as they wanted. And because I loved the music, I wanted to be involved. And so I would go to all those concerts and usher, because I could get in for free. And that was important to me.

Myra Beeler 17:36

I started ushering when I was right... almost the beginning of the contest. My dad was a Gleeman, and so as children of a Gleeman, we were recruited to usher. And it was in the old high school I remember, which was at the site where the Catholic church is now. And they had a nice, big auditorium, and, you know, sloping seats, regular theater seats and things like that. And by ushering, we got in free. And I think we got free popcorn too. And I was, like, eight years old when I started that.

Laura Frye 18:21

And you had a costume, right? As I recall, all the volunteers had to...

Myra Beeler 18:27

Mom made us costumes. And so, yeah, we wore costumes, and we ushered and we got to sit clear down in front. And I was just thinking, my favorite group in those early years was a quartet of good looking young men. Of course, I was way too young for them, but the House Brothers.

Elle Griego 18:53

I think I know who you're talking about. I think we have a photo of them at the archives.

Jane Romig 18:57

I particularly remember the Forcep Four.

Peggy Alexander 19:01

They were doctors

Jane Romig 19:02

Dressed like old time physicians.

Jerry Frye 19:04

I remember the name.

Laura Frye 19:07

Because you did volunteer jobs at the shows, [Jerry Frye: Yes.] too, so you could see the shows. I didn't ever -- I don't remember volunteering at the shows, and what I do remember when we attended them later as paid patrons, was everyone in costume. All of the staff, all of the volunteers, wore the costume. So my comment about the connection between Pacific University and the festival, what would be my recollection in those years from like, '61 to '64 or so, as a volunteer from the university, I didn't costume. I wore whatever. If it was for an organization, you wore the sweatshirt or the t-shirt or whatever for that organization. But the community people, who were volunteering, and later, as a business owner, when we volunteered -- and we did -- then we dressed up in our Gay Nineties costumes, whatever it was. But those other kinds of jobs we... so I think we were very eager. I was very eager to see how the community was dressed. I thought it was just such fun to see them in their costumes and watch the parade. My parents would come from Central Washington. Then, after we were a married couple with children, they would come because it was, you know, it was the Kiwanis breakfast, which was a big deal. And everybody wanted to go to the pancake breakfast, and then they wanted to wait on the street corner. And there was a costume contest. And there were other little contests.

Jane Romig 20:48

Well, they'd get the old steam engine out. That would be part of the parade. Whistle on that would just about take your head off.

Laura Frye 20:57

Kids would decorate their bicycles.

Myra Beeler 20:59

Yeah, the high school band played in the parade, and other than homecoming, when we did a show, it was the only time the band marched.

Jane Romig 21:17

And we only knew one song. [Romig laughs.]

Myra Beeler 21:20

And it was miserable for me. I played the French horn. That's very hard to play when you're walking, because you hold it against your hip, and juts...

Laura Frye 21:31

It was very cold. Oftentimes, it was very cold.

Jane Romig 21:35

Because it was always in February.

Peggy Alexander 21:41

Yeah, in February it was cold.

Jane Romig 21:41

Does anyone remember the year that Forest Grove was on television, national television, and they had a program that focused on small town festivals all over?

Elle Griego 21:49

Yeah, the Wide Wide World show on NBC. I think it was '55 or '56.

Jane Romig 21:54

Yeah. I remember when they came, it just poured. Everything, just pouring rain, and we were all out there in our costumes.

Elle Griego 22:03

Wow, that sounds so so cold. I didn't know that.

Jane Romig 22:06

But then, everyone was so excited to see our town on television. Of course, it was black and white. That was before the days of color.

Myra Beeler 22:14

And it showed, it seems like they had some windows here, store windows with some of the townspeople in them posing.

Laura Frye 22:26

Because they were also -- one of the contests was window story. [Alexander: That's right.] In fact, I think our Gay Nineties picture is still in Frye's window. They keep it up a lot.

Elle Griego 22:39

Yeah. Did you decorate, then, in the window display?

Laura Frye 22:42

Yes, oh yes, the window would be decorated. And I don't know how many years that went on. And the men would grow beards, start the day after Christmas is when they would usually start. They would start growing their beards.

Jane Romig 23:00

There was a beard growing contest in high school. The high school boys. [Multiple laugh.]

Laura Frye 23:08

That's funny. And Jerry worked at French's Menswear at the time, which was located where Pizza Schmizza is. And they even had their owner order matching jackets for them all, and they had wide, pin stripe cotton jackets. Theirs were blue and white. [Romig: Did they have boaters?] And they had boaters. And some of the other businesses, various businesses, ordered them from Duane. So there were red and white ones, and there were blue and white ones. And so various businesses had their male employees dressed the same, and the women would have their dresses made.

Jane Romig 23:12

There's another tag in there too. Picture of the Gay Nineties...

Laura Frye 23:55

Flounces and all the things.

Elle Griego 23:57

I'll make sure to get some photos of that after. Thank you. I'll put this right here.

Laura Frye 24:03

I was the music teacher, and so one of the responsibilities of the music teacher in those days of the public schools was to put on a Gay Nineties program. So Friday of Gay Nineties, there would be a school program, everything from the elementary schools all the way to the high schools. And so I remember learning the children knew all of, you know, all of the, you know, "Very Oldsmobile," "Daisy, Daisy," ...

Jane Romig 24:33

"Light of the Silvery Moon."

Laura Frye 24:34

Any of those. And you would, as the music teacher, you would decide which class was going to sing which, and you would kind of act them out, and the children would all come dressed. And I think the girls were the ones who couldn't wait until they were like, you know, at least 10 before they could wear the... they could have somebody make them a swimming suit. That was a popular one for the young girls, particularly junior high, high school. Do you know what that Gay Nineties swimming suit looked like? [Griego: Yeah.] Those pantaloons and...

Elle Griego 25:06

Yeah. I heard everyone... like they were all homemade, which is fascinating.

Jane Romig 25:11
I sang in a girls quartet...

Laura Frye 25:14
From the high school?

Jane Romig 25:15
Yeah, and we performed for them. We had matching costumes... [Laura Frye: probably gingham, or...] Yeah, it was a floral pattern, but we used to say -- and everybody knew how to sew, so you made your own costumes.

Laura Frye 25:33
And everybody's trunks or closets had various sizes of those swimming suits. And you'd pass it on.

Jane Romig 25:41
And my grandfather had a dry goods store and a shoe store here in town back in the Gay Nineties. So, you know, I had access to some, oh, he had Derby hats and those old lace up black shoes that the women would wear... yeah, so I had good sources of costume.

Laura Frye 26:06
Our son was so eager when he was... would've been probably in 1980, around 1980. He wanted to be a ribbon winner at the costume contest. And he finally, we borrowed a boy's suit from someone for him to wear. And he did. He was able to get a ribbon. He wanted that so badly.

Elle Griego 26:36
How special. And then, Jane, I'm curious, you said your father ran the two theaters. Did the theater do anything special for the Gay Nineties?

Jane Romig 26:49
Oh, well, of course, everybody was in costume. I don't recall that they programmed the shows that were shown.

Myra Beeler 27:01
I don't imagine they had too much business the night of the program of the contest.

Jane Romig 27:07
Oh, yeah. And there were two shows, weren't there. There was the Friday night elimination contest, and then Saturday night was the Gay Nineties revue.

Laura Frye 27:17
There were two shows. 6:30 and an 8:30 or something.

Peggy Alexander 27:23
And for a year or so, there they had on Thursday, they had the women. [Romig: That's right, yeah.] They became Sweet Adelines, but they had a contest too. Or maybe they just sang, I don't remember, but it was just the women on the first -- they didn't necessarily commingle, them women into the men's.

Myra Beeler 27:40

I don't know when it started, but when I was in college, they had the Gay Nineties revue, and then the can-can dancers were all Pacific students who...

Laura Frye 27:55

They practiced for weeks and weeks.

Myra Beeler 27:59

But I never took dancing lessons, so I didn't ever try it. Well, I worked at the Tip Top when I was in college, and that was kind of fun during Gay Nineties week. For one thing...

Peggy Alexander 28:15

It was basically the only restaurant in town.

Myra Beeler 28:18

The only restaurant of any size. It was a hangout for both college and high school kids, and businessmen came for lunch and things like that. But I should just say I earned 95 cents an hour in wages plus tips, and if I had a \$3 tip day, that was really good, but on Gay Nineties weekend, I might get as much as \$10 in tips because of all the business. And the quartets, for something to do, they'd come in and take up a booth, and then they'd start singing, and then another one would come in and sing. It attracted huge crowds of people. So it was a really busy day that Saturday of Gay Nineties. We had to wear our restaurant uniform, so we didn't get to dress up. But it was one of the highlights of the year as far as getting good tips.

Elle Griego 29:22

Yeah, no, that's so wonderful to know. Thank you for sharing that. It does interest me, in terms of the business side of things, how the businesses saw the positive effects of people coming in from all over Oregon. For Frye's Athletics, was it a popular day? Did people come necessarily, or did you guys perhaps, I'm curious if you had a parade float or anything besides a window display?

Laura Frye 29:51

No, we just had the window display. And we participated, we would go down... I don't... I can remember watching the parade, but then we had children at that time. So I can't remember... I'm sure our ad in the newspaper, in the News-Times all reflected, because the ad salesman would come and put the whatever we had, Gay Nineties specials or whatever it was, and t-shirts available, and that kind of thing. So from a retail standpoint, just more traffic. It was certainly a positive, there was not a [unintelligible], because more people in town means more business.

Peggy Alexander 30:36

And it was always fun. I mean, we all looked forward to Gay Nineties weekend. The kids and the adults, I think all really looked forward to it as a fun thing to do.

Jane Romig 30:48

In school, especially, it was so fun to see the teachers all dressed up.

Laura Frye 30:51

Because on Fridays, you dressed up at school. The businessman started dressing up on Thursdays, I recall.

The grocery stores, maybe the banks. Of course, the bank would, because they were closed on Saturday, so Thursday and Friday were really big for them.

Myra Beeler 31:09

Something I remember about parade day is that there were, you know, a lot of the people in the parade were dressed in costumes. Most of them, the band wasn't, but some of the others were, and a large percentage of the spectators were also dressed in costumes. Now, it was really a whole town thing.

Jane Romig 31:31

They had draft horses, and you could pay \$1 or whatever it was and ride around town in this hay filled wagon.

Laura Frye 31:43

Yes, a man who worked... George Horner, who for many years worked at the Pacific bookstore, and his wife was a physical ed professor at Pacific. He was the owner of draft horses, and he was very involved in the community. And he was a Gleeman, and very much a part of the show. He was often the MC.

Myra Beeler 32:06

Well, he was a part of a quartet.

Jane Romig 32:10

What did they call themselves? Oh, gosh, Ralph Shumm and George Horner...

Peggy Alexander 32:22

Hap Hingston.

Myra Beeler 32:23

And then the fourth guy...

Jane Romig 32:27

Ralph Olson?

Laura Frye 32:30

I think it changed...

Peggy Alexander 32:31

It changed periodically, that fourth person...

Myra Beeler 32:34

The first one was dark haired and kind of stocky and more in the age of Ralph and George at that time.

Jane Romig 32:46

But they were good. They were funny.

Myra Beeler 32:48

And then there was another town quartet that Chuck Olson was in. And they were very good, [Alexander: A little younger.] but they never competed in the contest. They were kind of a... [Alexander: Like a host.] A host and they sang songs, maybe, but they weren't part of the...

Laura Frye 33:09

They were comics. They did a lot of comic...

Peggy Alexander 33:12

And I can remember my friend Sally [unintelligible] and Sharon Kaiser were the MCs, and they battered back and forth. Then there were two college kids. [Laure Frye: Oh, really?] At the barbershop contest, yeah.

Myra Beeler 33:25

Oh, wow.

Laura Frye 33:28

It was definitely a...

Myra Beeler 33:32

Back in those days, it was a full, a whole community kind of event.

Laura Frye 33:35

And as we alluded to, it was big enough that they were able to have stars. I mean, if you call, you know, Peabody and Jerry Colonna, because they would be, they would have them be... what do you call it, master of ceremonies for the parade? Is that what you call it? Grand Marshall for the parade, and then they would do a featured act of some kind. If they were a comedian program, they would be... and that would bring me more ticket sales. And of course, the chamber of commerce was extremely busy, and that took a lot of planning from the chamber to... they organized. It was through the chamber that a lot of the organization happened. I mean, because... [Beeler: As it grew...] They, well, yes, that's where the tickets were sold, and that's how the parade route was decided...

Jane Romig 33:36

Someone had to arrange housing for the quartets.

Laura Frye 33:54

Perhaps, yes. It was the clearing house. Is that what you would call? So very big responsibility for Gerry Franks, I think at the time, was that, for so many years, is that his name?

Myra Beeler 34:56

Speaking of housing in the earliest days, the quartets found housing in homes.

Elle Griego 35:03

Really? I didn't know that. That's fascinating. So just all throughout Forest Grove, would people... I'm curious, do you know more about that? Like, did people just invite them to stay with them?

Myra Beeler 35:16

I don't... I guess I was too young. I don't know exactly how it worked, but it was through the Gleemen in the beginning. And so it started out with Gleemen's homes, and I imagine they didn't have enough, they contacted their friends...

Laura Frye 35:32
Through the chamber, I think.

Myra Beeler 35:34
I don't think, In the earliest days the chamber was involved. I don't think so, but I don't know.

Laura Frye 35:40
I think it just got too big.

Myra Beeler 35:43
Yeah, as it grew, because in the earliest days, it was just quartets singing on Friday, and then the ones who made the cut singing on Saturday, and there were no... in the very earliest days, there wasn't a parade or anything.

Laura Frye 36:02
Oh, so that was '47, '48.

Peggy Alexander 36:07
But I can remember when Melissa and Blake were in college, they sang in the West Side Singers, which was one of the, kind of they had inherited from the Gleemen, or maybe there was somebody in the group in there too, but I remember making a costume for Melissa, and I think she still has it. And Bill and I came up one year, and we, all four of us, ushered. I can't remember if it was a barbershop concert or what it was, but it was in the 1990s.

Laura Frye 36:40
Yes, because it ruled it...

Peggy Alexander 36:43
It kept going.

Laura Frye 36:44
It kept going, and then it just became less. [Alexander: Yes.] Then no parade, then less entries, all that.

Jane Romig 36:54
Does SPEBSQSA still exist? Society for the Preservation of Barbershop Quartet Singing?

Peggy Alexander 37:01
Yeah, I think it does. [Griego: I think so.] I think they've changed its name so that it's not so hard. I just heard, not too long ago, I was reading a News-Times and I thought, "Oh, bummer. I would have gone to that barbershop concert." And then the article had said that this is the name now, instead of SPEBSQSA because SPEBSQSA was so hard to say and understand.

Laura Frye 37:22

I'm pretty sure it still goes because Pamela Jean's niece... [Alexander: Uh-huh, Rowan?] No, her... Rowan's mother. So her nephew's wife, Lisa sang within the last 5, 10, years. Was active in that.

Elle Griego 37:47

And that's interesting, with the West Side Singers. Do you recall when that organization popped up? Because it seemed like the contest was going on, and then it seems that there almost was a split of some sort with... because there's the West Side Singers and then the Tualatin Valley Harmony Masters. Or overlap, perhaps split is not the best word, but do you remember when those kind of organizations started to form?

Peggy Alexander 38:10

I don't, but Melissa and Blake might remember that.

Laura Frye 38:14

Tualatin Valley Harmony Masters, I think were always in -- I don't mean always, but I don't believe they were necessarily tied to the Gleemen. The Gleemen became West Side singers, which is still in operation, but Gleemen used to just be men -- your brother was in... your... who was in it? [Beeler: My dad was.] You had those programs from the Gleemen.

Jane Romig 38:42

My brother had saved the programs.

Laura Frye 38:43

Your brother had saved the program. So the Gleemen were just men, and then they added women.

Myra Beeler 38:48

The Gleemen and Girls, at some point.

Laura Frye 38:55

Maybe I'm thinking it was, like, '85... and then they became West Side Singers. And some of the original Gleemen were still singing in West Side Singers. George Horner was still singing.

Peggy Alexander 39:08

And Jerry Roscher sang in both groups.

Laura Frye 39:11

And Jerry Roscher, yes. And so that other man there, I can picture their faces. Couple of the other... and then they became the West Side Singers. And West Side Singers are still operating today.

Elle Griego 39:28

I see. Well, I'd like to talk more about kind of how the festival declined and how things changed over the years, but first I wanted to ask a question to all of you. Why do you think in Forest Grove, there was this festival based around the nostalgia or the celebration of the 1890s decade? Like, why in post war America were we nostalgic for the 1890s of all decades?

Myra Beeler 40:00

I think that that was an era when barbershop singing was popular, or maybe even first developed, I'm not sure, and that's why, when they decided to have the barbershop contest, it had a Gay Nineties theme.

Jane Romig 40:23

Yeah, I think it was just also viewed as a kinder time. Not as complicated, safer.

Elle Griego 40:36

Yeah. What do you mean by that, complicated and safer? What was, I guess, complicated or unsafe in the context of...?

Jane Romig 40:44

After all the things that had been developed during both World Wars, they look back on that as kind of a haven.

Laura Frye 40:53

I think it really had to do with the Gleemen. I think it did, because the Gleemen were centered on music... and the center of music that Pacific had become, because not only did they have the professors here for music, but they had a preparatory school for piano playing. And, you know, the opportunity to study with professional teachers of note. And so it was really a center for music, and music was very important in the community. So then the Gleemen, because there was a men's -- we had a professor here by the name of Daniel Preston, and he had a men's and young boys singing groups that before them, or about that time... or was it after that?

Myra Beeler 41:58

Dan Preston wasn't here in the 1940s.

Laura Frye 42:02

Oh, okay.

Peggy Alexander 42:03

He was my voice teacher from when I was 11 through college, until I was 22.

Laura Frye 42:07

All right, so there's this, really, center of men's voices. And then, however Gleemen became interested in barbershop quartets, and then I think maybe it was even they also saw it as a fundraiser. [Beeler: Probably.] They also saw it as a fundraiser. Let's do this...

Peggy Alexander 42:28

And also a fundraiser.

Laura Frye 42:31

They were all involved because it was made of community people. They were so interested in the community that then the community became involved, and the service organizations became involved, whether it was Kiwanis and Rotary and chamber and they all... "And let's have a parade!" It was... "And now let's have a barbershop pole!"

Myra Beeler 42:58

I don't know exactly when the Gleemen were organized, but the name of the conductor when my dad joined in 1946 or 1947 was Valdemar Hollandson, and I don't even know if he was associated with Pacific or not, if he was a professor or something there or not, but he had a really vibrant personality, and I think he's, I don't know if it was his idea. But I think he was a driving a horse and getting a start.

Elle Griego 43:46

Yeah. Oh, that's good to know. So it sounds like it was all about the music at first, and almost like the 1890s theme was kind of an added on, almost like an afterthought or a way to make it more fun. It wasn't about historical reenactment. It was really just...

Laura Frye 44:02

I think it had all to do with the barbershop quartet contest.

Elle Griego 44:03

What's interesting to me about the barbershop quartet -- I actually looked into that when I first started this research. And the barbershop genre, it did evolve from like the 1890s but not in the way like the image that we see of the barbershop quartets in the '40s and '50s were nothing like the barbershop quartets from back in the day. And then it wasn't ever that popular, until the revival movement. So it was almost like the barbershop movement, the revival movement that happened during the Gay Nineties wasn't historically accurate. Not to say that was a bad thing, but it's interesting how it was based off of a kind of a past that didn't exist. So it's kind of like, Okay, how did, how did the 1890s get attached to barbershop? That's something I think, I'm still looking to figure out. But I'm also curious, in terms of the 1890s, do you remember any sort of similar themes anywhere else in American popular culture? Perhaps not a whole Gay Nineties festival, but any movies or music? Did you see barbershop music anywhere outside of Forest Grove in Oregon?

Myra Beeler 45:21

Not at the time, I don't think. But "The Music Man" is one. [Romig" Yeah.]

Laura Frye 45:24

"Lida Rose," isn't that what they sing? [Beeler: Yeah.]

Peggy Alexander 45:28

And that was -- in the movie, it was the Buffalo Bills quartet that sang it in the movie. The original movie.

Myra Beeler 45:43

But are you familiar with that movie?

Elle Griego 45:45

I don't think I am. So that's good to know.

Jane Romig 45:47

The Music Man? Oh, that was great.

Myra Beeler 45:49

The Music Man is a story about this... I guess you'd call him a flim-flam man who comes to a town and he says he's gonna form a band and he's gonna...

Jane Romig 45:52

Teach the music, and everybody buys instruments and buys the uniforms that...

Laura Frye 46:13

That aren't real.

Jane Romig 46:14

And then, you know, he just gets away with the money and...

Myra Beeler 46:20

But he falls in love with the local librarian, and so it all ends up good in the end.

Elle Griego 46:28

What year was that movie from? Or roughly?

Myra Beeler 46:33

The '60s or '70s.

Jane Romig 46:34

Early 60s? Robert Preston was in it and Shirley Jones. [Alexander: Shirley Jones, yeah.] Yeah.

Peggy Alexander 46:43

It's been a play. I mean... [Frye: Went to Broadway musicals, yes.] Sydney did the Mary in the library, and not too many years ago.

Jane Romig 46:43

Yeah, it was first, I think it was first a Broadway musical. And then...

Laura Frye 46:55

It's within the heart of the very, very... when Broadway musicals were so you know, "Oklahoma!" and "My Fair Lady."

Jane Romig 46:55

You should get your hands on a copy.

Elle Griego 46:55

That's good to know, thank you.

Jane Romig 46:55

It's a good movie.

Peggy Alexander 46:55

You'll love it! You'll be singing the songs.

Laura Frye 47:16

Yes, Theatre in the Grove has been at least... I don't know. I know they've done Music Man, have they done it more than once? I always remember Bob [unintelligible] was a wonderful...

Peggy Alexander 47:29

Well they did it, not within the last three years, I would say.

Laura Frye 47:32

But that was in [unintelligible]. Sydney did it at [unintelligible.] [Alexander: Yes.] But Theater in the Grove... [Alexander: I don't think so.] They've done it. Bob Goldstein was such a wonderful... But you know, I think something else about the barbershop quartet, because you have that with the word barbershop in it. In our romanticizing of that era, we see the barbershop as a community gathering place where ideas are shared... [Romig: Like a general store...] a general store, like the Potbelly Stove. And I think it's that warmth of community and is, as Jane said, a safer, less hurried... what's the other the other adjective you used, besides safer? Less complicated era, where you just came and you talked about whatever was on your mind, like the... and Forest Grove had an element of that. There was a men's coffee group that met for decades, and it would move sometimes from one cafe that would... that maybe wasn't able to accommodate them anymore or whatever. But at 10 o'clock, you went to coffee, and it was only men for many decades, and you flip the quarter. And there was the local furniture guy, [unintelligible.] Paterson, who was the quarter flipper. And if he was going to be on vacation, I think he had somebody else, assigned somebody else to flip that quarter. And everybody got out their quarters, and whoever got the wrong, you know, you played the elimination game. And by the time... they bought all the coffee. And then I remember hearing Mary Easton, that you interviewed, I think she was one of the first women who broke into the men's coffee group.

Elle Griego 49:32

Does it still exist in some form? I know that there's one at...

Laura Frye 49:36

There's one at 8:30 in the morning, this is not the same time... this was the downtown businessmen, the lawyer, the jewelry store owner. There usually weren't physicians that came in because they were from too far to come in, yeah, but just very... it'd be a table of a dozen, a dozen, Jerry? [Jerry Frye: Oh, yeah. Yeah.] The insurance agent, the bankers, and it was a similar, it was almost like that... I think that that has something to do with why the Gay Nineties, why the barbershop quartet... I think the quartet part of it has more to do with it than the era, than the decade.

Jane Romig 50:25

I agree.

Peggy Alexander 50:27

And Jane's right, life in the United States was simpler than it is right now. There's lots of stuff going on that...

Laura Frye 50:38

Even during the reenactment. I mean, not just during the 1890s, the late '40s to the late to the mid-'90s, I guess is when it ended.

Elle Griego 50:51

Something I think is interesting about, well, the Gay Nineties festival, specifically -- well, the parade, it ended around the early-'90s or so, maybe late-'80s. And then it started around '47, maybe '48, which is, you know, the years of the Cold War, essentially. And it's just, do you think fears of the Cold War, maybe the atomic bomb kind of encouraged like or kind of... does that play a part in the whole simpler times thing, where there was fears of the atomic bomb, so let's go to simpler times? Or was it something else? Was there a general fear during the early Cold War years here?

Myra Beeler 51:44

I think the Cold War was pretty distant, at least in kids' minds.

Laura Frye 51:54

Did you have to do bomb threats?

Myra Beeler 51:56

Well, we had... [Laure Frye: Drills?] What was it that climbed the tower, and watched the skies?

Jane Romig 52:05

Civil Air Defense. My mom participated in that, and I'd go along with her. There was a wooden tower, and volunteers would go up there, and any plane going over, they tried to identify and call them in, so it was tracking all of the air traffic.

Myra Beeler 52:22

It wasn't very realistic, because it was worried about planes from Russia coming over Forest Grove.

Laura Frye 52:33

Did you have drills? Did you have bomb drills? [Beeler: No.]

Peggy Alexander 52:37

I don't remember that.

Elle Griego 52:40

So do you think, I don't know. Perhaps this is something you guys haven't thought about. I haven't thought too much about it, but was there... was the fear of communism, just generally in society, and, you know, rapid social change of that era. Did that influence perhaps why people looked fondly on the 1890s? The Gleemen, perhaps?

Jane Romig 53:01

I think it was an underlying fear. There was an underlying fear all through that time period, especially that was when Russia had acquired the atomic bomb capabilities. Yeah, it was tense.

Laura Frye 53:22

And I think communities wanted an identity. They wanted to have a day where they had a festival. And I think it was just ripe for the Gleemen to have this, this little idea they had. And now, let's build on this. And now, let's get the businesses involved. And it just kind of snowballed and this whole... a lot of it is the

community, and all of this other thought about underneath, you know, fears and why we wanted to do it. I don't think people, they didn't go through that kind of [Romig: Analysis, no.] thought process. It was just wanting to do something with your neighbors, have the children involved, multi-generational... and they didn't even think that hard. It was just, "Let's all go do this."

Myra Beeler 54:16

I think that they looked on the Gay Nineties maybe as an innocent, real clean living kind of times, because, you know, they weren't going to do Roaring Twenties or anything like that. Because that was, I mean, back in those days, you couldn't buy alcohol in Forest Grove, for example. And it just was a cleaner, more innocent time, I think. And I like that aspect of it, probably... plus the barbershop singing is... they don't have to worry about it being too racy.

Laura Frye 55:03

The costumes were fun, and it was still a part of people would say, "Oh, that's like my grandparents." There was still relatability for the adults in the household. They could actually remember, or the grandparents could remember. And then I think there's always this draw. We're drawn to the old fashioned. I mean, now my childhood would be old fashioned now to my grandchildren, but to me, old fashioned was Gay Nineties. And you got a chance to wear a long dress, so you got a chance to wear a hat or, you know, maybe wear makeup or wear gloves, or there's that play dress up kind of thing

Jane Romig 55:57

Everybody's attic had trunks full of stuff. [Romig laughs.]

Laura Frye 56:01

Yes! Because it was still within reachability.

Jane Romig 56:07

Forest Grove had not grown all that much when my dad was little here. I think it was, the population was about 1500, so that would have been the early 1900s and and when I was a kid, it was about... by the time I graduated high school, it was between 5000 and 6000, but that's not a huge growth.

Myra Beeler 56:30

When we moved to Forest Grove, it was about 2500 when I was in first grade. So you're right, probably.

Laura Frye 56:46

It was seven when I came, as I recall.

Peggy Alexander 56:48

And Forest Grove has always had a kind of a small town feel.

Jane Romig 56:54

It's just far enough out of the way. And it used to be that this was the main road to get to the coast before they built Highway 28, the sunset highway. You could hardly cross Pacific Avenue on the weekend, because it would just be bumper to bumper, people going to the coast.

Laura Frye 57:13

That probably helped for the Tip Top, because sometimes probably people stopped on their way there.

Jane Romig 57:18
Oh, they did!

Myra Beeler 57:19
They turned on College Way. College Way was a two way street then, and then go around, and our house was on the corner where there's a dormitory now, and we could hardly get across the street on weekends in the summertime.

Jane Romig 57:35
And then they built the Sunset Highway, and that opened and man, Forest Grove was a ghost town for a while.

Elle Griego 57:42
Oh, I didn't know that. That's really good to know.

Peggy Alexander 57:45
When Ralph Shumm worked in the bank in Portland, and he was the only person that my family even knew that drove the Sunset Highway. Mom and Dad were still going down TV Highway. [Romig: Oh, yeah.]

Myra Beeler 58:01
My dad was fascinated with the building of Sunset Highway. He'd drive us out there now and then to check out the progress and walk on the road bed.

Laura Frye 58:13
And I think even the buildings, when you think about the buildings in Forest Grove, like Old College Hall, or just some of the downtown buildings. And the way that, you know, the old furniture...

Peggy Alexander 58:29
There are old buildings and they had old storefronts.

Laura Frye 58:32
And the storefronts, I think, that they lent themselves, so celebrating the Gay Nineties wasn't so far...

Myra Beeler 58:41
It wasn't a far reach.

Laura Frye 58:43
It would be like in the...

Jane Romig 58:44
But I think without the Gleemen and without Pacific University supporting the festival, [Laura Frye: Oh, yes!] you know, it was possible to thrive here in Forest Grove, where other, maybe in a different small town, didn't have those resources. It wouldn't

Laura Frye 58:44

And manpower and the artists, we know that we were talking earlier about the artists for years and years, for the backdrops, for Gay Nineties. So some man named Merv Cooper, and he, I mean, for decades, he designed those backdrops, and they were art worthy.

Myra Beeler 59:28

They were. He did that for a very long time. Until... let's see... probably close to the 1980s.

Laura Frye 59:40

And he started them, probably when he was a student.

Myra Beeler 59:45

At Pacific, probably because he wasn't a native Forest Grovian or anything.

Laura Frye 59:51

So probably they see there's those contacts they can make at the university.

Elle Griego 59:59

And it sounds like there were so many people involved in the festival, in the Gleemen who made this happen every year. And so, you know, just about everyone in town participated. But now here we are in 2025, and of course, it doesn't really exist anymore. The parade doesn't exist. The contest kind of exists on a much smaller scale with the Tualatin Valley Harmony Masters, but the West Side Singers are not from Forest Grove anymore. I'm curious, do any of you remember the parade in its final years, or another question I have is, why do you think it disappeared?

Myra Beeler 1:00:42

Cell phones and computers.

Laura Frye 1:00:50

Lack of volunteers, I can remember that because we were still active in the business, when it fizzled, and I think at that time it was like, "Phew! We don't have to dress up anymore." I was probably teaching out at Gaston by that time, because that was, I mean, "Oh, he doesn't have to grow a beard this year."

Jane Romig 1:01:15

Well, and the downtown had lost some of its vitality.

Laura Frye 1:01:18

We'd lost our drugstore, we'd lost our... at least one of the hardware stores, and things had just changed a lot.

Jane Romig 1:01:30

It had become more of a bedroom community than a self contained...

Myra Beeler 1:01:35

The core area here in downtown Forest Grove was the whole commercial area when we were growing up.

Jerry Frye 1:01:43
JCPenney.

Jane Romig 1:01:44
Miller's Hardware.

Laura Frye 1:01:44
We had Miller's department store.

Myra Beeler 1:01:47
We had London's Department store here on Main Street.

Jane Romig 1:01:53
Oh, London's department store.

Myra Beeler 1:01:54
We had two little grocery stores, plus a Safeway right here on Main Street when we moved to Forest Grove and it all spread out. And I wasn't really joking when I said cell phones and computers, people get so involved and they can find out things all over the world from those sources. And who wants to take time to organize a singing contest? I think technology has done a lot to make that less interesting.

Elle Griego 1:02:42
Yeah, that makes sense. Do you feel like there's a loss because it doesn't exist anymore? Or do you think that's just kind...

Myra Beeler 1:02:49
It ran its course.

Peggy Alexander 1:02:57
Sure was a fun time to live through.

Myra Beeler 1:02:59
It was. It really was a whole...

Peggy Alexander 1:03:02
And I've often thought what a wonderful town it was to grow up in, Forest Grove.

Elle Griego 1:03:07
Yeah, and there's a question that I like to ask everyone. There's not a right or wrong answer, but do you think that the festival could, or even should exist again today, or and what would that look like?

Myra Beeler 1:03:38
I don't think it could.

Jane Romig 1:03:41

Probably not on a town wide basis that it used to have. I mean, I would be glad to see the contest come back, because I still love barbershop, but...

Peggy Alexander 1:03:52

Me too. And when I first came here today, I was talking with the minister, and she was excited. I was telling her what we were going to be doing, and she was excited. She said, "Oh, well, if your gal sings at Pacific or something, and wants us to sing, we would be glad to host something. You know, it would help the town," and that. But I can't picture it reviving itself.

Myra Beeler 1:04:19

But I think it was such a down home kind of a thing. I don't know if it would fly today. It'd have to get a lot more glitzy and stuff, and then it wouldn't really be the same.

Peggy Alexander 1:04:38

I'm curious to know what you're hoping to do, because you said, I think you said you wanted to make Forest Grove have a notoriety... is it Ballad Town, U.S.A., or something like that? [Griego: Yeah.] I'd be curious to know what your plan is.

Elle Griego 1:04:56

Well my plan really is just to preserve this memory, because, you know, it's interesting how, as we talked about, Forest Grove was known as Ballad Town, U.S.A. back in the day, it was on national television and radio. But then you go talk to anyone who's moved here in the last 30 years, or is of my generation, you tell them about the barber pole, and they're like, "Oh, like, hair cutting?" Or, "Oh, barbershop music. What do you mean?" Like, they don't know what that is, so a lot of it is preservation. But I also think it's important to reflect on how we gathered in the past, how we as a community, as a small town, have changed over the years, and how we can come together again, like we did in the past. I think really the Gay Nineties part of it was really just about bringing the community together, and using nostalgia just as an instrument for that.

Myra Beeler 1:05:51

Yes. I think you see as sort of an example of that kind of community involvement, at the Verboort sausage feed in the fall. Everybody participates in that community, and whether it's embroidering dish towels to sell there, or serving sauerkraut, or what... everybody participates. And I think it almost has to be a small town thing, where you know your neighbors. I live in Hillsboro now for the last 60 some years, and in my own neighborhood, I don't know everybody. And you don't have that close community feeling, I think, as you grow.

Elle Griego 1:06:53

Yeah, that's definitely a big change. I think in Forest Grove, I think the closest thing we have to the Gay Nineties now is probably, well, there's the farmers market and then the Concours d'Elegance, the car show, that seems to be the big thing. In fact, I interviewed Tim Schauermann and he kind of clued me in that the Concours d'Elegance, it seems, started around the Gay Nineties decline. So I think that has a little something to do with it. Everyone who was in the rotary started doing that, maybe instead of putting their efforts in that. And it's like, well, I mean, I'm biased. I think it would be kind of fun to have a Gay Nineties festival again, but I don't think that's necessarily the way. But perhaps we could come up with something new as a community. It's just kind of interesting. It's like, oh, maybe we need to do a -- today, I think people are more nostalgic for the '50s, so we could do a, I don't know what rhymes with... like a Nifty Fifties or something, I don't know, but...

Myra Beeler 1:08:06
That would be fun.

Peggy Alexander 1:08:10
But you're right that the concourse really kind of is a big thing now in Forest Grove.

Laura Frye 1:08:16
And the parade that has been that has taken somewhat of a community feeling, is the Christmas parade. They call it Holiday in the Grove. [Griego: Yeah, you're right.] And they really... because I remember it from its inception, maybe 40 years ago, and it was just a few bales of hay on a few open flatbed trucks. No big deal, but now it's become quite a light parade that goes through that. And then the high school still does a parade for homecoming, or does, didn't for many years, but has maybe the last 10 years. Parades are things that people like.

Peggy Alexander 1:09:04
Maybe it's just a changing of the times.

Laura Frye 1:09:11
I think it is. But that holiday really does seem to have... and they do music events, they have various things around, and then, as you said, the farmer's market allows that.

Myra Beeler 1:09:25
But you know, when we grew up, if we took a vacation, most likely it was to go visit our relatives and then come back here. And people have so many opportunities to do other things that are maybe to them more exciting, but they don't want to necessarily get tied up in something like that. But the idea of having something going back to the '50s or '60s, or something like that, that might be sort of... but I don't know how you would organize it.

Jane Romig 1:10:02
Yeah, I'd say the '50s would be more fun than the '60s.

Laura Frye 1:10:06
We know what we were doing in the '60s. [Multiple laugh.]

Jane Romig 1:10:09
Those of us who were over there.

Elle Griego 1:10:12
Yeah. Well, I think that's about all the time we have for today. Do any of you have any more concluding, final thoughts?

Peggy Alexander 1:10:18
This was fun to do. And thank you for... working on this. I think it's really exciting. I'm excited to see what comes of it.

Elle Griego 1:10:34

Well, thank you so much. This was a lot of fun, but I couldn't have done it without all of you. So I appreciate your time today.

Myra Beeler 1:10:40

Well, I hope you found some useful bits of information.

Elle Griego 1:10:43

I certainly did. Thank you again.

Laura Frye 1:10:47

And I think bottom line is, it was fun. And I think I'm kind of remembering at the ends of it, I think part of it became a bit grueling, because the volunteer base was less and the enthusiasm was less, the participation of quartets was less. The Gleeman and Girls was dwindling, and hadn't discovered their new self, and so those members were aging, and there just wasn't that vibrance, as Myra said, talking about the families. I can remember that early on, where the families would be around ushering, and you'd see the children dressed and the rest of the family members, and then it just became a bunch of older people. So it it aged itself out.

Elle Griego 1:11:40

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense.

Peggy Alexander 1:11:44

But it certainly provides good memories.

Myra Beeler 1:11:46

It does.

Elle Griego 1:11:49

Well, thank you. Thank you all.