

# *Alberta Craig Rider* *Life Long Learner*



*by Sheron S. Gibb*

*Alberta Rider*  
*Life long Learner*

*Dedicated to*  
*The Children*

*Sheron S. Gibb*  
*Tigard, Oregon*  
*2005*

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## Early Years

On a cold winter day, January 7, 1913, Alberta Craig Rider was born at home to Willie Edward Craig and Diantha Smith Craig, in Pima, Arizona. She had two older sisters and three younger brothers. Alberta loved her family dearly, especially her Papa. She would wait by the window every afternoon when he came home from work on his motorcycle. As she ran to the gate to meet him he would give her a big hug, hand her his lunch pail, and take her by the hand as they walked up the path together. Sometimes on his days off they would go and pick wild strawberries. Oh, how she loved her Papa!

When Alberta was four, her Papa had to go out of town for a few days. She cried and cried when he left. He promised that if she would be very good, he would bring her a special present. He brought her a tiny cup and saucer that said, "To my Darling." She kept it for all of her life.

Alberta's Papa worked in a copper mine. In the fall of 1918 there was a terrible accident at the mine. He was severely injured and died in the hospital several days later. Alberta was only 5 years old.



Alberta Craig Rider  
one year old, 1914

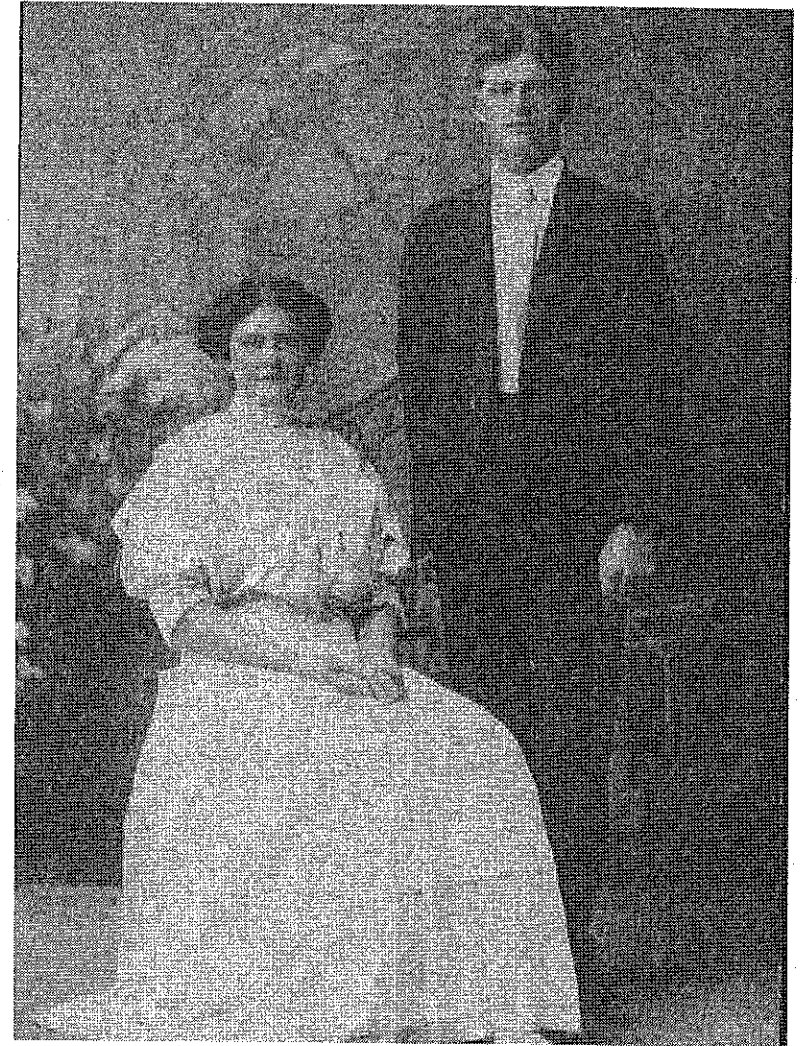
## LIFE WITHOUT PAPA

After her Papa died, Alberta's family went to live with her Grandma Smith until the insurance money could be used to buy a small farm and build them a home close by her.

Soon after losing her Papa, Alberta's family got the flu. She recovered first and went to stay with her Uncle Winnie and Aunt Lottie (her mother's sister who could not have children) They kept her for 13 years! No one ever asked Alberta what she wanted or explained anything. All she knew was that her little five year old heart was broken. She would never forget how alone she felt that first night as she crawled into that big, white bed with no sisters to snuggle with.

Her Aunt Lottie sewed beautiful dresses for Alberta and made big, satin bows for her hair. She took piano and dance lessons - but none of that could erase the sorrow of a little girl who had first lost her Papa and then her family.

At that young age, Alberta came to really understand the heartache that can come to a lonely child, whatever the reason. For all of her life she would be careful to guard the tender feelings of children. She would speak quietly to them and listen to what they had to say.



Diantha Smith Craig  
Willie Edward Craig

## DISCOVERING MUSIC

There was one thing that helped Alberta live with her loneliness - and it was almost like magic! It happened the first afternoon that she went to stay with her aunt and uncle. As she stepped into the house, she heard the most incredible sound coming from the parlor (living room). She followed the sound and heard music for the first time in her life. It was coming from an old, wind-up gramophone in the corner of the room. She just had to follow the music and let her little feet dance!

When she was about six, her Uncle Winnie saw her dancing and taught her the waltz. Music became a source of joy and the one thing that helped her cope with feeling so alone.

In spite of all the heartaches, Alberta did spend many wonderful days and years with her aunt and uncle. She was grateful all of her life for the dance and music lessons she was given and an auntie who made her practice! Music would become a very important part of her life.

Alberta grew to love her Uncle Winnie, whom she described as, "One of most patient and gentle men who ever lived." He seemed to be extra understanding of her feelings and tried to be kind and loving. One day, when she was seven, he took her by the hand and said, "Sis, let's go change the irrigation water

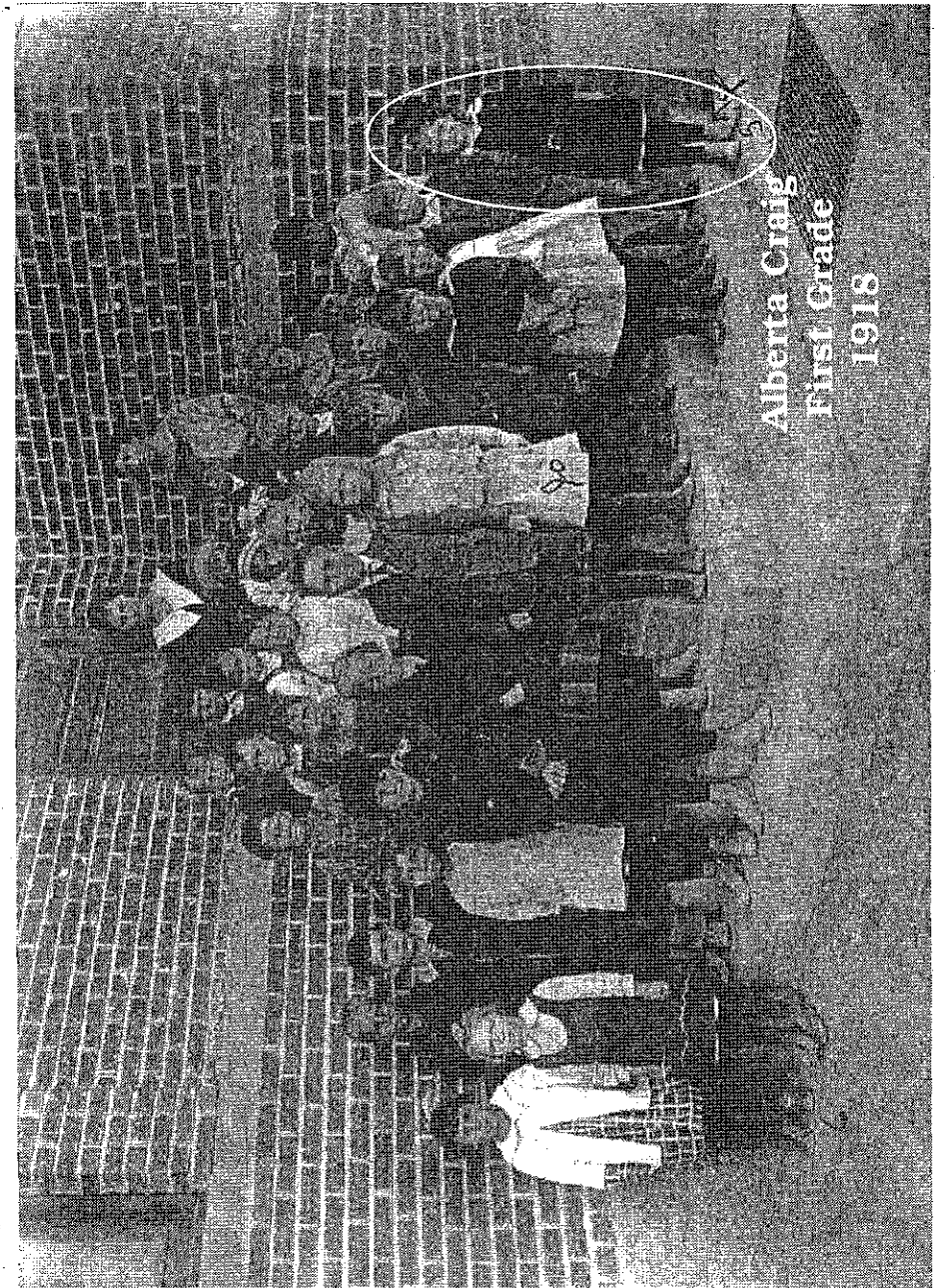


Alberta Craig Rider  
Age 10

in the ditch and give this lawn a good watering." She said, "It was because he took my hand like my Papa used to do that I was warmed through by that expression of love. I wanted to sing and dance as we walked along. This is what I had missed most of all about my Papa - his taking my hand as we walked along."



Uncle Winnie and  
Aunt Lottie Moody



## GROWING UP IN THE 'OLDEN DAYS'

Alberta grew up in what children today like to call the 'Olden Days.' At first they had no electricity, no washing machines and dryers, (they washed their clothes on a scrub board and hung them on the line to dry.) They used kerosene lamps and their water was piped into the house from a well. They had to carry in wood to heat their stoves. There was an icebox, but no refrigerators or freezers. They had no microwaves, no television, no video games and no cell phones. There were no showers with hot, running water. They had no dishwashers (except themselves.) They had never heard of VCRs or DVDs but they didn't miss them.

They had friends to play with, school, and plenty of work to do. Alberta liked being outside doing yard work much more than she liked working in the house.

Their movies had no sound, so Alberta's first job as a teenager was playing the piano for the silent movies at their town theater. She had to watch carefully to play the kind of music that was needed for each scene: scary, romantic, fast, slow or funny. She worked at a movie theater after she was married. All of her life, Alberta loved the movies. Even on her 90th birthday she and a friend went to the movies and had popcorn and soda.



Charlie Chaplin  
Star of Silent Movies



## SCHOOL DAYS

Alberta always liked school. She attended Thatcher Elementary School in Thatcher, Arizona. The kids all walked to school and played ground hockey at recess with sticks and a ball. She loved it! She liked to do acrobats and back-bends where she would do the spider walk. She would much rather be a tomboy than be all dressed up in fancy clothes. They had no P.E. classes, but each year they would dance and braid the May-pole. Her favorite year was fourth grade because of her kind and loving teacher, Mrs. Creer. It was during fourth grade, at the age of ten, that she began to play piano for the children at church.

In Jr. High she did tap dancing and clogging, played baseball and ran track. She also loved drama. Her favorite role was that of Lady Arabella in a play about Cinderella. She played piano for the choir and school musicals. She graduated from Valley Jr. High School as valedictorian of her class.

After Jr. High school the kids all went to Gila Valley Jr. College for their last two years of High School. Their mascot was the "Gila Monsters." She then went on to



Maypole Dance. In many countries, the first of May is known as May Day - a day to welcome Spring. Children in Great Britain and the United States sometimes dance around a Maypole to celebrate.



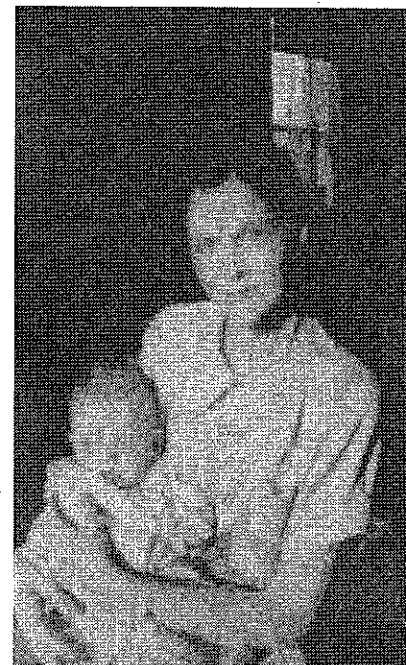
Dance Recital in High School. Alberta is second from right, next to the teacher.

Eastern Arizona College for one year before being married at the young age of 18.

Alberta had 2 children, Craig and Earline, before her marriage ended in divorce. Once again she was sad and alone through no fault of her own. Alberta took very good care of her children and loved them with all her heart.



son Craig, Alberta, daughter Earline



Alberta, with Craig & Earline as children.



## MEETING MR. RIDER

Alberta met Charles Warren Rider at the movie theater where she worked. Ren (as he was called) came around on a regular basis to service the sound equipment. Ren was an electrical sound engineer who had installed the first talking picture shows in South Carolina. He was born in New Jersey, and spent his early years in the east before moving to Arizona, where he met Alberta.

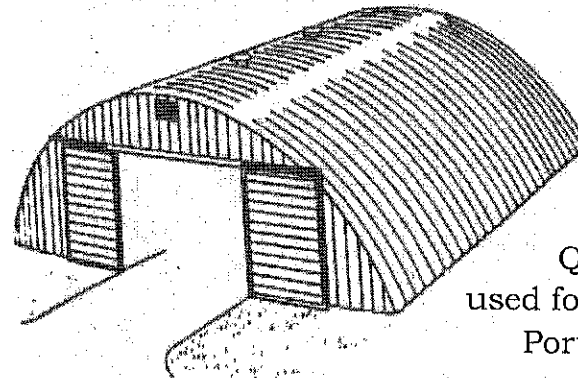
Ren served in World War I as a very young recruit. Years later, After Pearl Harbor, he went right down and signed up for active duty in World War II. While in the service he installed communications systems where they were needed in the islands of the Pacific.

While he was serving in World War II, he and Alberta kept in touch through letters. After he came home, Ren and Alberta were married in April, 1945. They spent an extended honeymoon in Philadelphia where Ren went to work after the war. There was an opening for a sound engineer in Arizona and one in Portland, so after he was discharged, they moved to Portland in September, with Alberta's children, Craig and Earline. They lived at

the Rose Motel in West Portland for two months while they searched for a place to live. Housing was very scarce at that time because of the many men working in the shipyards. Craig and Earline went to school in quonset huts that were set up in west Portland because the schools were so overcrowded.



Ren Rider  
World War I



Quonset hut  
used for school rooms  
Portland, 1945

## FINDING THEIR HOME

Finally the Riders heard that there was an old, rustic log cabin for rent in Tigard. The first time they set foot on the property they fell in love with it. They had truly found their "little corner of heaven." It was 20 acres with more than 50 beautiful fir trees.

The building of the log cabin began in the late 1870's by a French man named Doriot. It started out as a large, concrete structure used to wash and dry the English Walnuts that grew on the property. When the co-ops came and took over this task, Mr. Doriot harvested logs from the land and built the cabin right on top of this sturdy foundation. The cabin is the same today as it was when it was first built.

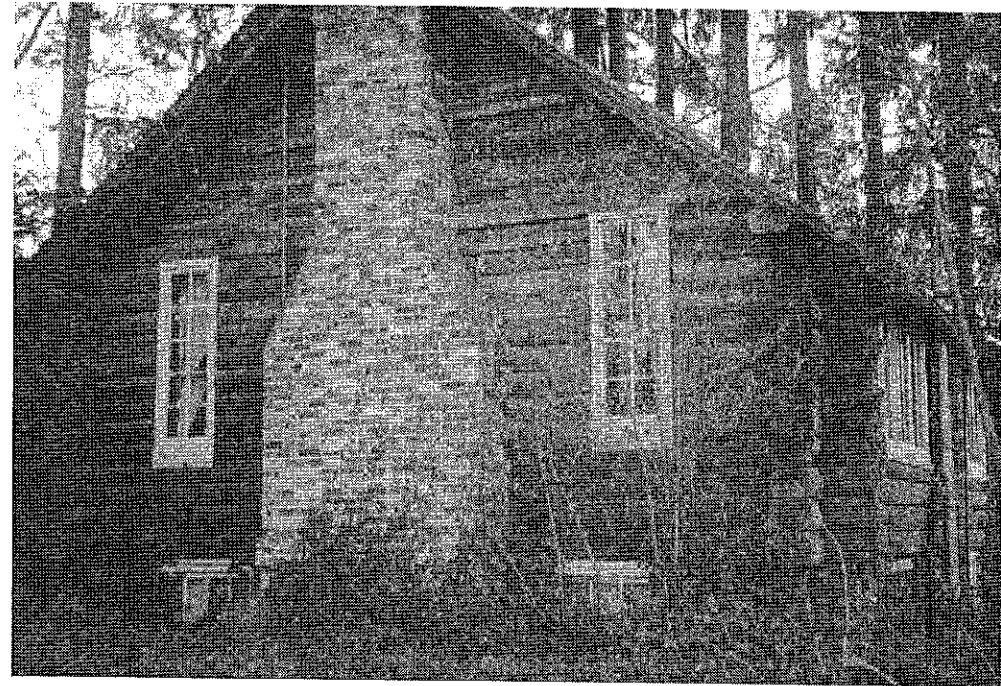
The Doriots never lived in the log cabin but instead lived in a little two story Dutch Colonial house in back that had been built years before the cabin.

There used to be a big dance hall at the corner of 133rd and Bull Mountain road. The Doriots built the log cabin as a guest house for their family and friends so they could have a place to spend the night when they came to dance and party.

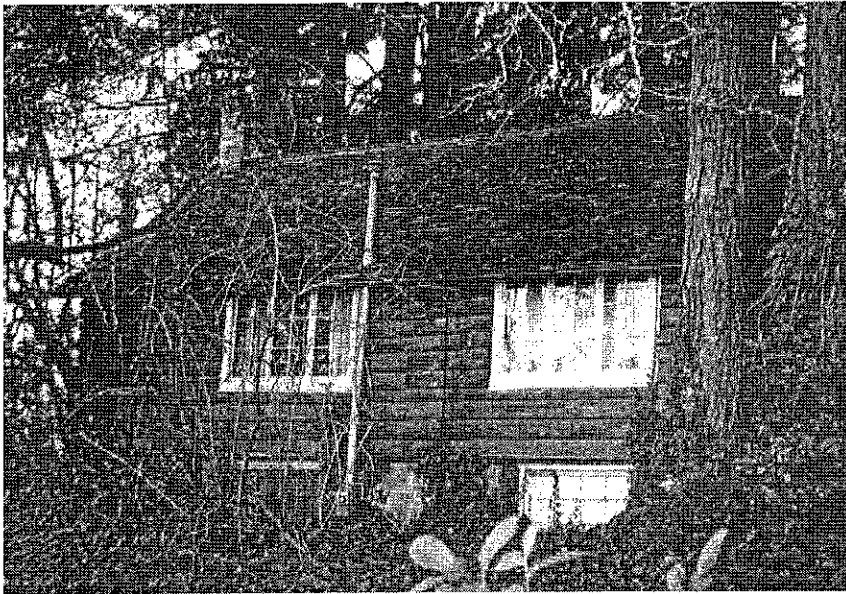
After the dance hall closed down, the Doriots began to rent the log cabin to military men and their families. It was from Mr. Doriot's widow, Delpha, that the Riders first rented (1945) and then purchased the property in 1947.



Ren and Alberta Rider, 1945

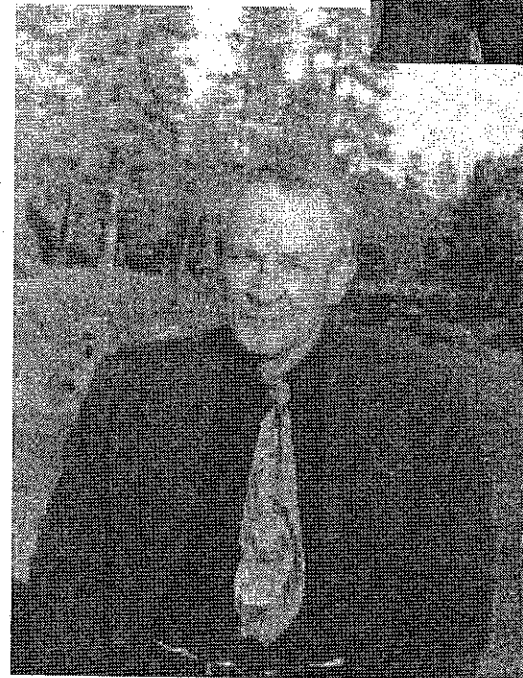


Log Cabin on Bull Mountain Road



Mrs. Doriot continued to live in the little Dutch house for two years after she sold to the Riders. She and Alberta became good friends. After she moved to Portland, the Riders rented the little house out for many years; mostly to young, struggling families with children. A house fire burned the top floor, so it was rebuilt with only one level. This changed the personality of the little house, but it was still livable. It now sits empty of furniture and people, but remains full of memories.

Alberta Rider  
1946



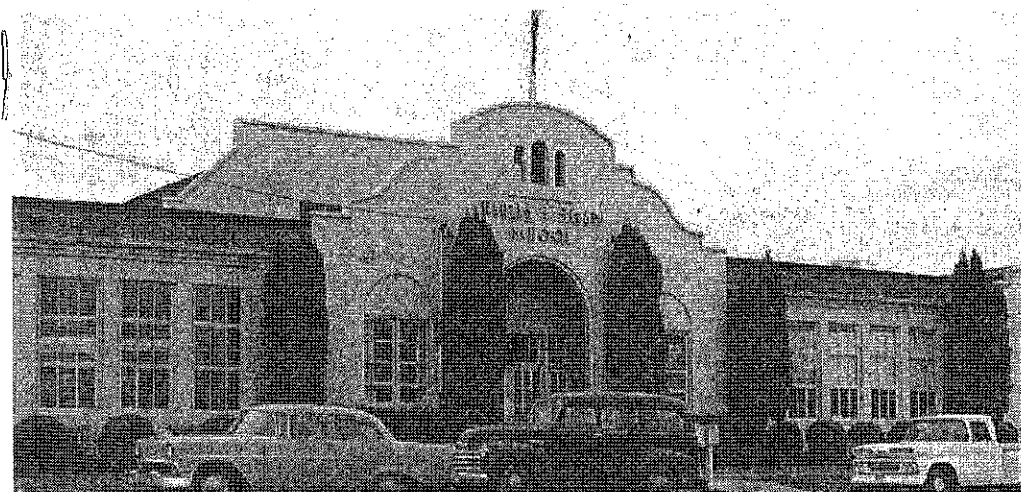
Ren Rider  
1946

## LIFE ON BULL MOUNTAIN

The Riders settled in to enjoy family life on Bull Mountain. Earline and Craig attended the original Charles F. Tigard Elementary School and then attended the old Fowler High School that stood on the corner where Rite Aid and McDonalds is now (in downtown Tigard) Earline was in the first class to attend the new Tigard High School on Durham Road.

Ren continued in his profession as a sound engineer, servicing theaters all up and down the west coast, including the Joy Theater in Tigard. He was a very intelligent man who was a voracious reader. His favorite magazines were the Smithsonian and National Geographic. He was a ham radio operator and enjoyed talking to people all over the world. Ren was always interested in history and the world around him. He valued honesty and had no time for those who used others to get ahead. He would rather listen than talk. He was a romantic who loved Alberta very much. Every summer morning, he would pick her a bouquet of the tiny colored violets that grew all over their property.

Ren and Alberta joined a square dancing club at the old Grange Hall on Pacific Highway in Tigard. They both enjoyed music and they danced together whenever possible, even in the kitchen at home.



Original Charles F. Tigard Elementary School on Highway 99W. (1961) Notice the on-street parking.



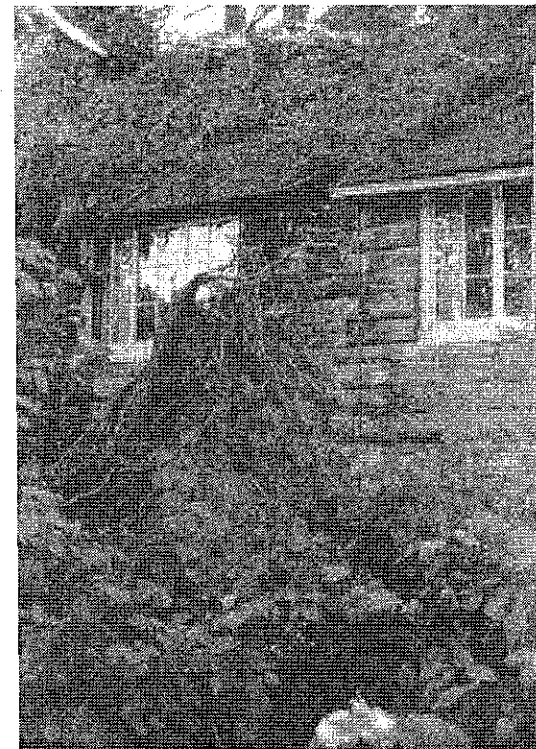
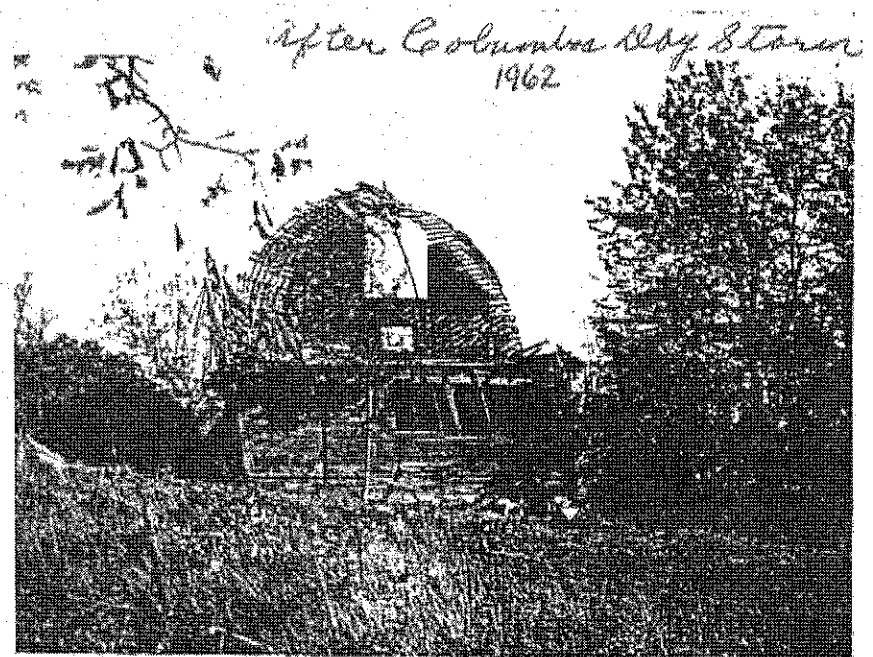
Alberta and Ren Rider and their little dog Weegie. (1960)

## THE BIG, RED BARN

On the property where the school now stands was a big red barn with an attached chicken coop. It was in this barn that Earline kept her little brown horse, Flicka. She loved to ride bareback all over Bull Mountain. She could ride fast and free because there were very few houses on Bull Mountain back then. Craig and his friends played basketball in the loft.

Craig also loved football and was a star player for Tigard High School. There were no busses for after-school activities, so he would walk home from Tigard High every night after practice. In his senior year he was Most Valuable Player and received a football scholarship to Lewis and Clark College in Portland. He played football for Lewis and Clark for four years.

There were several old, cement watering troughs near the barn that had not been used for years. Ren decided to fill one of them with water and plant a hydroponic garden (grown in water without soil.) He fed and fussed over his "garden" until it was doing quite well. The Rider's cows thought it looked pretty good too. They ate the whole thing! That was the end of his garden. The barn blew down in the Columbus Day storm of October, 1962.



### Craig Hunt Cops Valuable Player Award of Season

Moms and Dads club trophy, to honor the most valuable football player of the 1960 season, was awarded to Craig Hunt, three-year letterman, at the annual gridiron banquet given November 21 in the grade school cafeteria. There were 130 present.

Jerry Lillie, basketball coach at the University of Oregon, was the featured speaker at the affair. Highlight of the evening was the good look afforded of the accomplishments of the grid season just concluded, which included such high mark achievements as defeat of Beaverton and McMinnville and the capture of third place in the TTY league standings.

Alvin Bowers was voted honorary captain of the squad by his team mates.

## DOUGLAS IS BORN

On December 9, 1954, a son was born to Ren and Alberta. They named him Douglas Warren Rider after his father and the beautiful Douglas fir trees that grew on their place. Doug brought a great deal of joy to the household. By now, Earline had graduated from Tigard High and she too went to Lewis and Clark on an academic scholarship. Craig and Earline married and left home, so it was just Ren, Alberta and Doug.

Doug was always a happy little guy, but on the first day of kindergarten he came home quite disgusted. Alberta asked him what he had learned at school that day and Doug replied, "Nothing, they didn't teach us to READ nor WRITE!"

When Ren retired, the three of them took a trip to Guadalajara, Mexico. They enjoyed it so much that they rented out their cabin and returned for a longer visit. They stayed for six years! Alberta enrolled in the college of Guadalajara to learn Spanish and Doug learned from his friends at school. Ren loved to explore and have time for his reading. They learned much in Mexico, and hated to leave their many friends, but their "Little corner of Heaven" in Tigard was calling them home. It was a very happy day when they returned.



Ren Rider and son, Douglas, 1961.



Douglas Rider and pet cat, age 6.

## HOME IN TIGARD

Alberta kept busy playing the piano for church, weddings and funerals. She joined Toastmistress to become a better speaker. She taught the children at church, and she memorized long poems to keep her mind active. She freely shared the apples and blackberries that grew on her place, and she was always looking for ways to help someone. Alberta's mother came every summer for a long visit. It was a special time of getting to know each other. When her mother could no longer care for herself alone, Ren and Alberta invited her to stay on permanently. Her mother was with them for five years before she passed away at the age of 91.

Alberta's brother was so appreciative of the way she had cared for their mother that he presented to Ren and Alberta an all expenses paid, two month long vacation to Europe as a thank you. It was a wonderful time for them.

Doug had many friends who came and rode motorbikes with him on the property. He graduated from Tigard High School and was off on his own adventures. He went to professional clown school and learned everything from magic to juggling. He placed first in many categories in international competitions. He had found his profession as an entertainer....and his wife. She is also a professional clown.



Alberta playing for a wedding 1983



Ren,  
Alberta's mother  
Alberta 1974

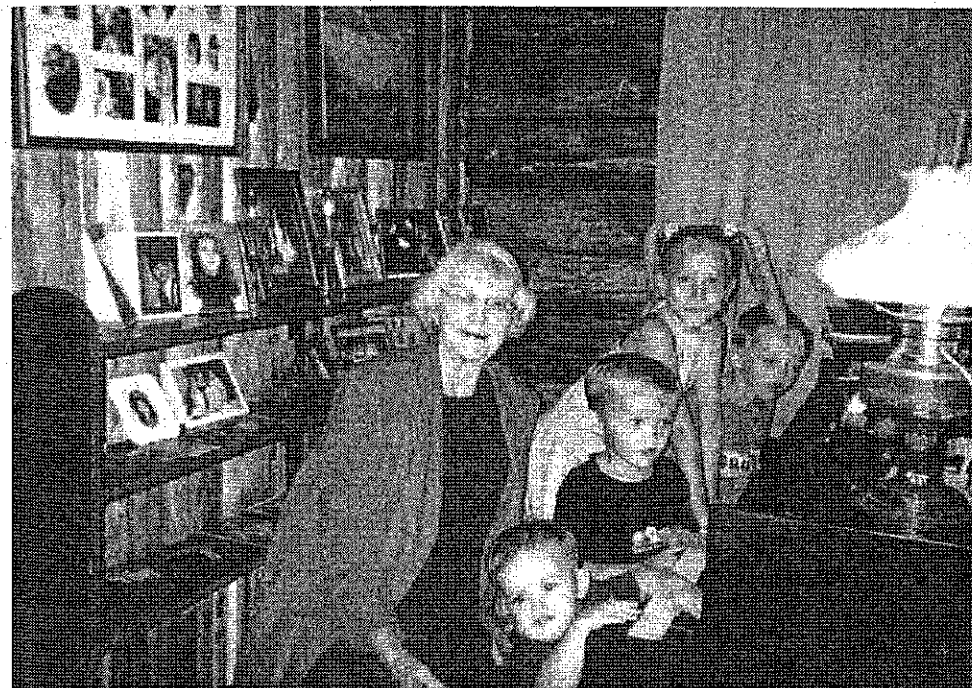
## LATER YEARS

Ren's health began to fail and he finally was confined to a nursing home. Alberta visited him several times a day, reading to him when he could no longer read for himself. He passed away at the Veterans hospital October 17, 1980.

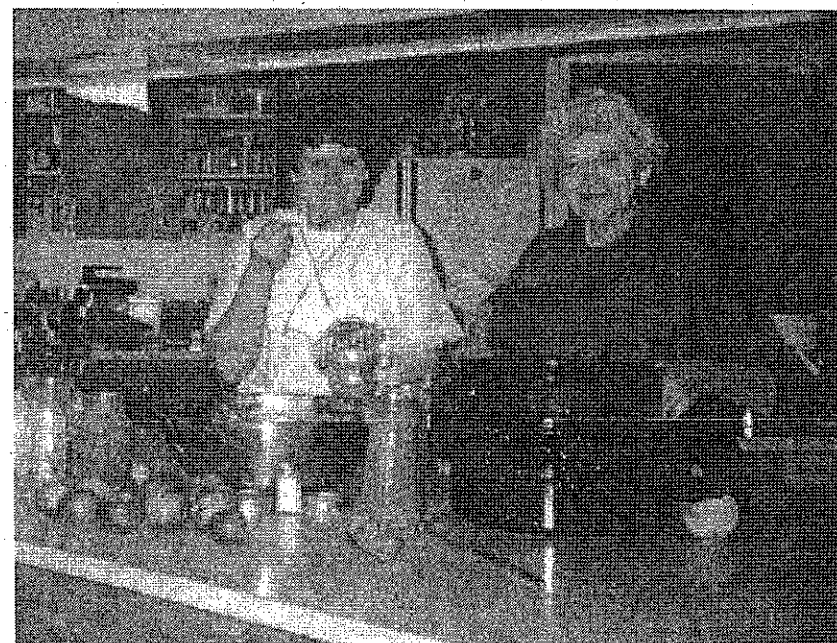
They had shared a wonderful life together. He left her his love and their "little corner of heaven." She had her family and many friends. She had her faith and her church. She had been through other trials in her life, and she set about doing what needed to be done to meet this challenge.



son, Douglas  
son, Craig,  
Alberta  
daughter, Earline  
(left to right)



Alberta shown with her four great-great grand children. She also has 10 grand children & nineteen great grandchildren.



Alberta sharing the wonderful gravenstein apples from her trees with a friend.

## MOVING ON

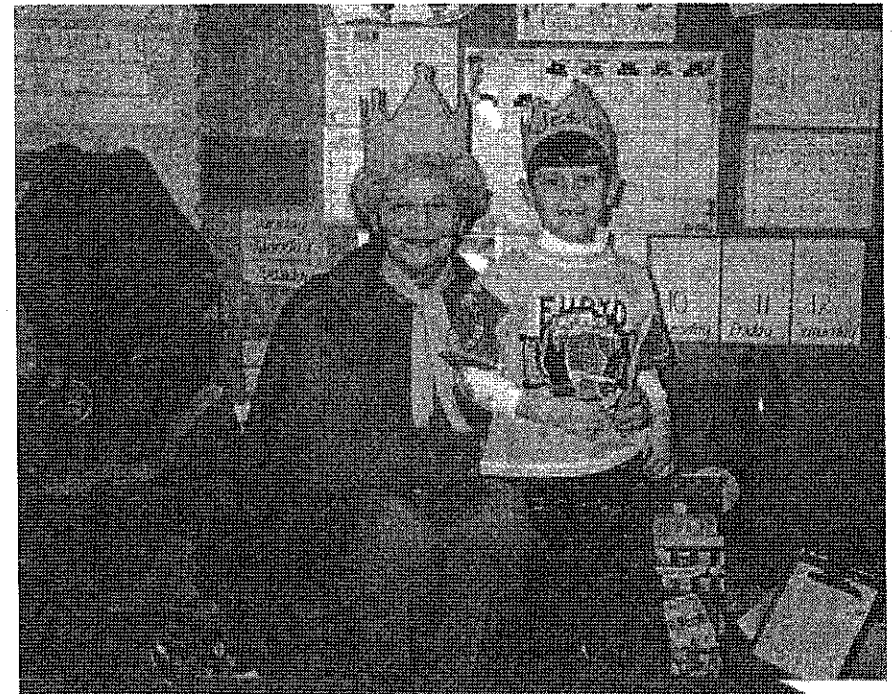
Alberta knew that the way to overcome her loneliness for Ren was to serve others and learn new things, so at the age of 68 she enrolled in music classes at Portland Community College and learned to write her own music. She took other classes and sent her transcripts off to Eastern Arizona College and graduated with an Associate of Arts degree at the age of 70. It was presented to her at her 50th class reunion. She took up ballroom dancing and won first place and supreme awards from Seattle to San Francisco. She danced in competitions until she was 90 years old.

She visited nursing homes and played piano for the lonely ones. She continued to play the organ every Sunday at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, just as she had for years. When the church built a beautiful temple on Kruse Way in 1989, she began playing the organ there also. She has done hundreds of hours of genealogy work - both for herself and others. Her knowledge of Spanish has been a blessing to many who needed help in this work.

Alberta continued to love the little ones. She became an "Oregon Grandma" to children whose own grandmothers were far away. She always took an interest in young lives and by her great example of love and kindness, she has encouraged and influenced many young people.



Dancing was such an important part of Albert's life. It kept her fit and active.



Alberta celebrating her birthday with young Jesse Gibb in Nancy Borman's kindergarten class. Mary Woodward Elementary school, 1990.

April 24, 2005

To whom it may concern,

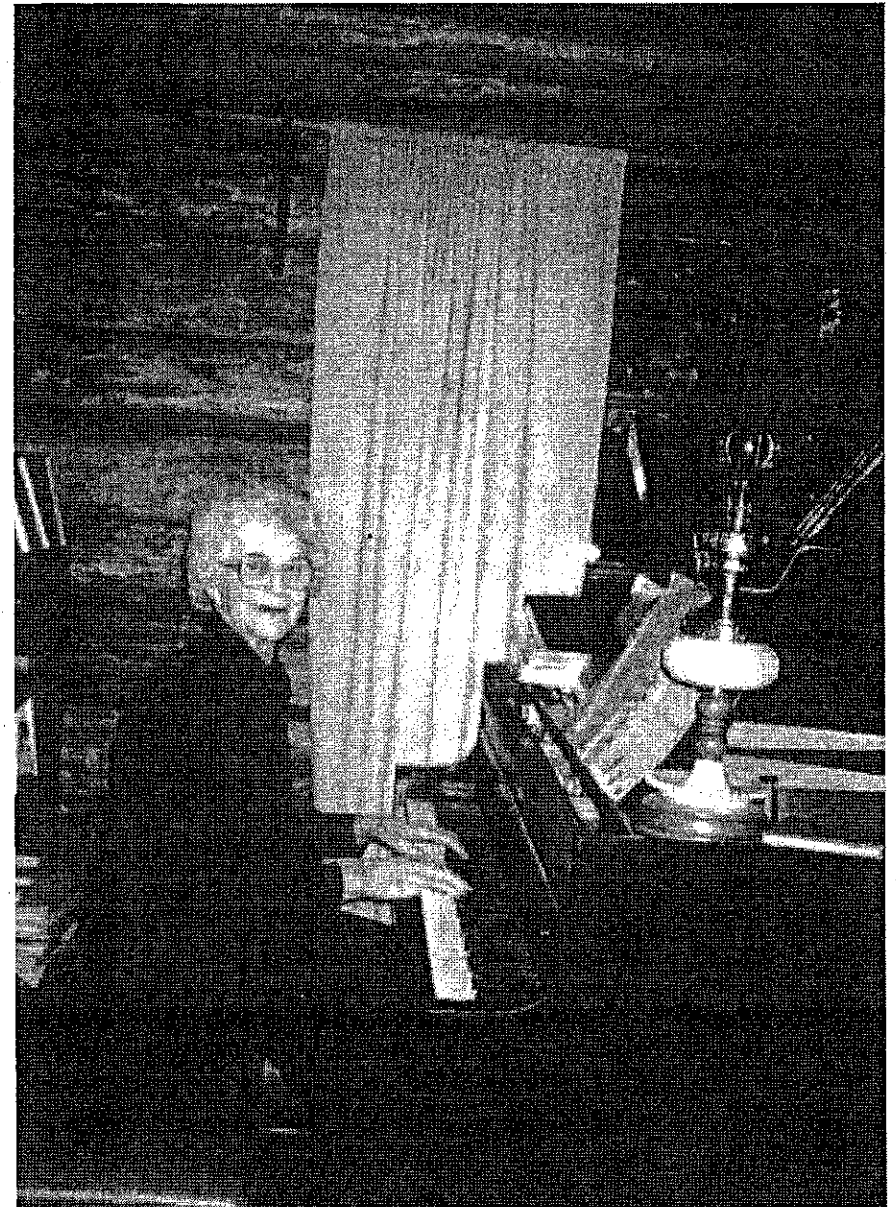
Alberta Rider is one of the sweetest people I know. We belong to the same church.

When my late wife, Mary, was battling breast cancer, she would have some very rough days; so rough that she would often be in bed. This would be the time that Alberta would call her on the phone to see how she was doing, and give her encouragement. Then, Alberta would put her phone next to her piano and would play a beautiful song for Mary.

It meant so much to Mary for Alberta to do this. Mary absolutely loved music! She loved to sing and play the piano herself. But even more than the music, she could feel Alberta's love for her through this sweet act of kindness.

Alberta's reaching out and comforting touch through a phone call will forever hold a special spot in this husband's heart. We lost Mary in October of 1999.

Harold Swanson  
Tigard, OR



Alberta playing her piano at home in her cabin.  
She brought comfort to others through her music.

## The School

For many years, Bull Mountain was a very quiet home for deer, raccoons, birds and other small creatures that lived among the few homes, undisturbed. Then, ever so slowly, homes were built and more and more cars traveled the narrow, two lane Bull Mountain road.

It was then that the developers began coming to call more and more often, wanting to buy the Rider's "little corner of heaven." At first the developers just took "no" for an answer, but as the Mountain became more and more popular and the available land began to disappear, they became insistent, even hostile in their efforts to acquire the land. While Ren was alive he just took care of them firmly, but after he was gone, it became a very stressful time for Alberta.

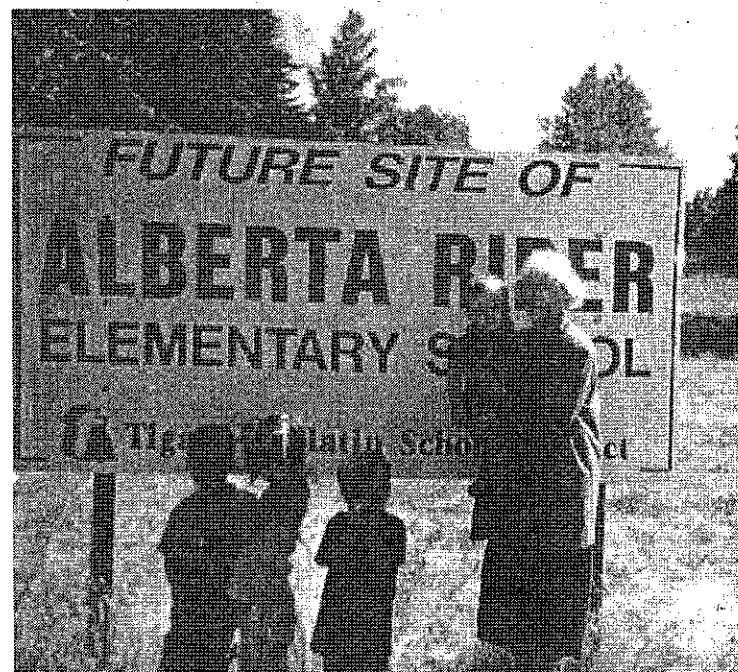
One day, in 1997 Dr. Russ Joki, Superintendent of Tigard, Tualatin School District came to call. At first Alberta was reluctant, but as she thought about the children, she knew that THEY should be the ones to have her "little corner of heaven."

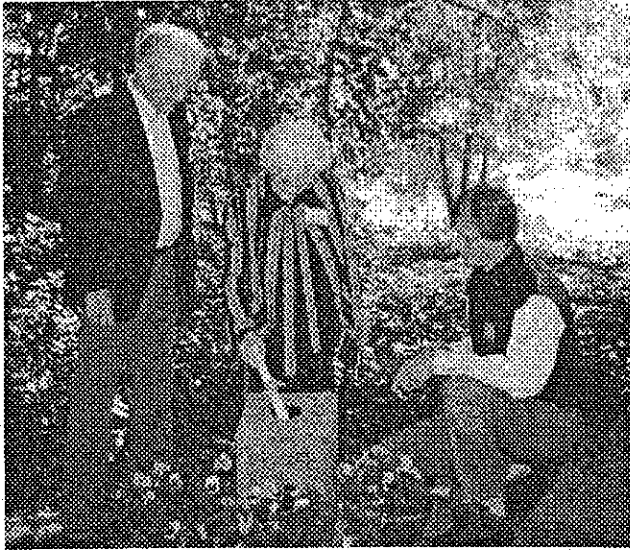
**Her message to the children is,**

**"That I love them, and I am glad that they are in my backyard, instead of a lot of houses with people I would never know."**



Alberta with school district officials and family members at site dedication ceremony, Sept 20, 1997





**NEW SCHOOL SITE** — L. Craig Hunt (left) and Doug Rider watch their mother, Bull Mountain resident Alberta Rider, stick a letter inside a time capsule on land where the Tigard-Tualatin School District will build a new elementary school.

## Site of future school dedicated by district

**TIGARD** — Three to five years from now, Alberta Rider will look outside her window and see something other than the forest of Douglas fir trees.

She'll see school children.

The Tigard-Tualatin School District's next elementary school will be built on 7.3 acres of property near Southwest 130th Avenue and Bull Mountain Road.

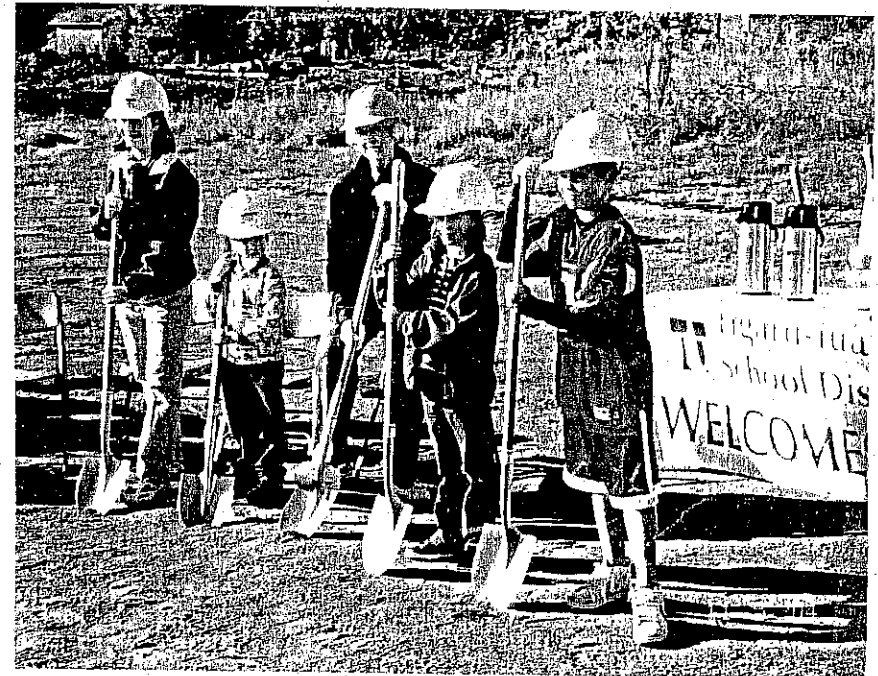
Earlier this year, Rider sold her land to the district. Under the sales agreement, she will be allowed to live on the property as long as she wishes, stated Susan Stark Haydon, spokeswoman for the district.

On Saturday Rider, her two sons and school leaders dedicated the future school site. The elementary will be named in honor of Rider.

During the ceremony, the longtime Bull Mountain resident told family and friends that she loves children and is pleased that her land will be used for a school. She also reminisced about her love of the property and the early days on Bull Mountain, when rush-hour traffic on Bull Mountain Road consisted of less than 10 cars.

District officials plan to build the school on the meadow portion of Rider's land, leaving the forested area for environmental studies — another point that pleases Rider.

Construction is planned for the next three to five years, reported Superintendent Russ Joki. District voters must approve a bond measure before that can happen, he added.



## School's namesake leads ground breaking for new Alberta Rider Elementary School

The district's newest elementary school moved one step closer to reality when ground breaking ceremonies were held Nov. 5 for Alberta Rider Elementary. (2004)

The activities were held at the school site off Bull Mountain Rd. near 133rd with the school's namesake, Alberta Rider, participating.

Now in her 90's, Mrs. Rider lives in a log cabin on the school property.

She spoke briefly at the ceremony, quoting poetry and expressing her love for music, dancing and the arts. She said she is looking forward to the school opening and the children coming.

Darin Barnard who has been named principal for the new school extended a standing invitation to Mrs. Rider to join him for school lunch.

The crew from Robinson Construction who will be building the school presented Mrs. Rider with her own pink hardhat to wear whenever she visits the construction site.

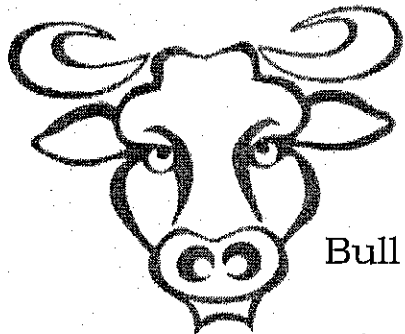
Also participating were Craig Kaeding and Siobhan Egan, students at Deer Creek Elementary and Clare Conway and Brady Watts, students at Woodward Elementary. The new school is expected to relieve overcrowding in both of those schools.

## School Mascot

The students were invited to submit ideas for a school mascot. In the end it was decided that the very best one was "The Alberta Rider Bull Mountain Bulls."

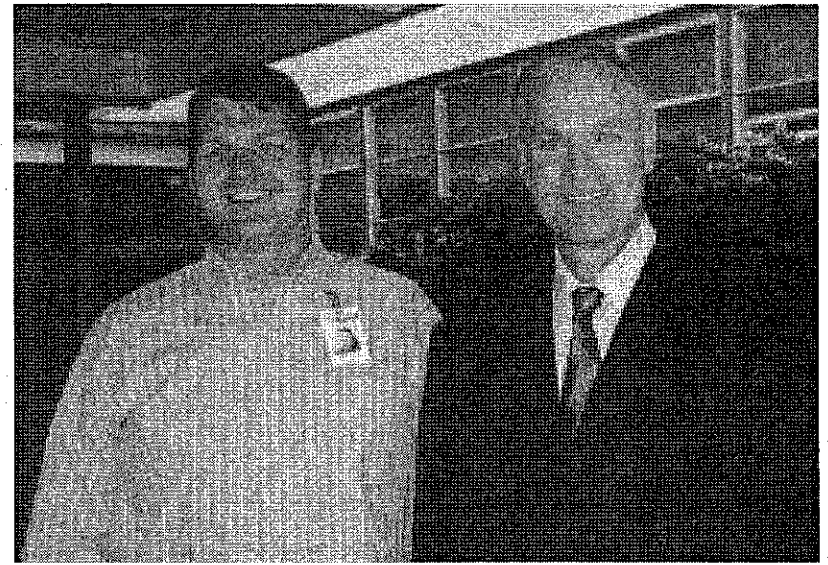
It is an interesting story as to how Bull Mountain got its name. As reported in the Oregonian Newspaper, October 17, 1972, Arthur Vincent, first cousin of C. F. Tigard, says, "Bull Mountain got its name from a herd of wild cattle that grazed on the mountain. They had trouble with one old bull. Just couldn't get him off the mountain, so folks started calling it BULL MOUNTAIN. Bull Mountain Road got its name from the mountain"

Beef Bend Road, which runs below Bull Mountain was originally called Bend Road. There was a school at the corner of Bend Road and 150th. Vincent thinks that Bend Road became Beef Bend Road from the cattle that grazed on the mountain or because Bend Road was where the local farmers would drive their beef on the way to market.



Art work by  
Sally Green

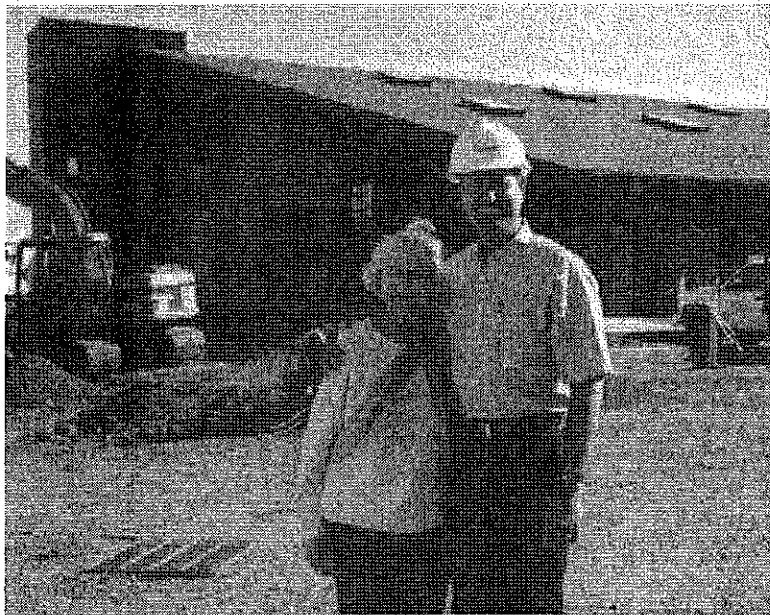
Bull - School Mascot



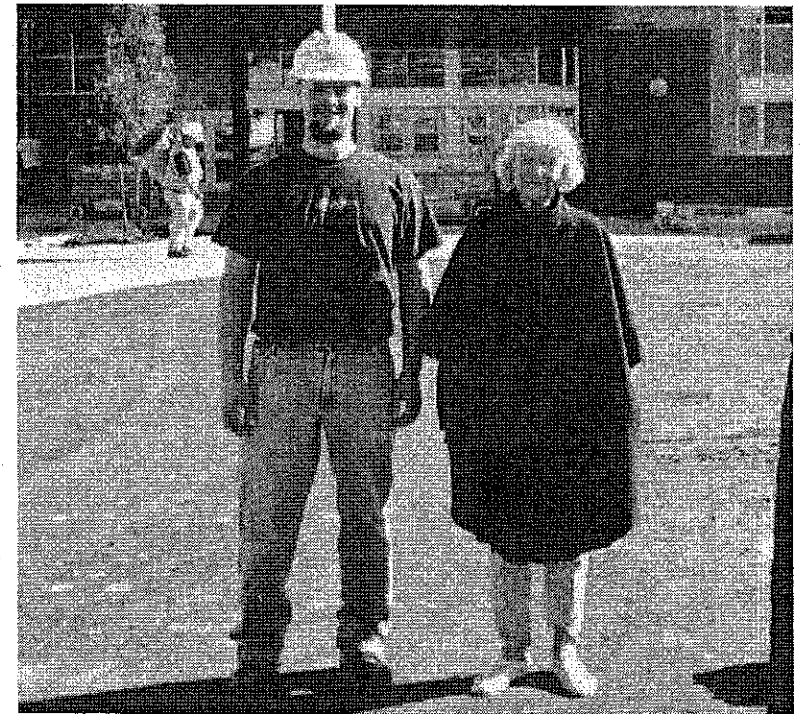
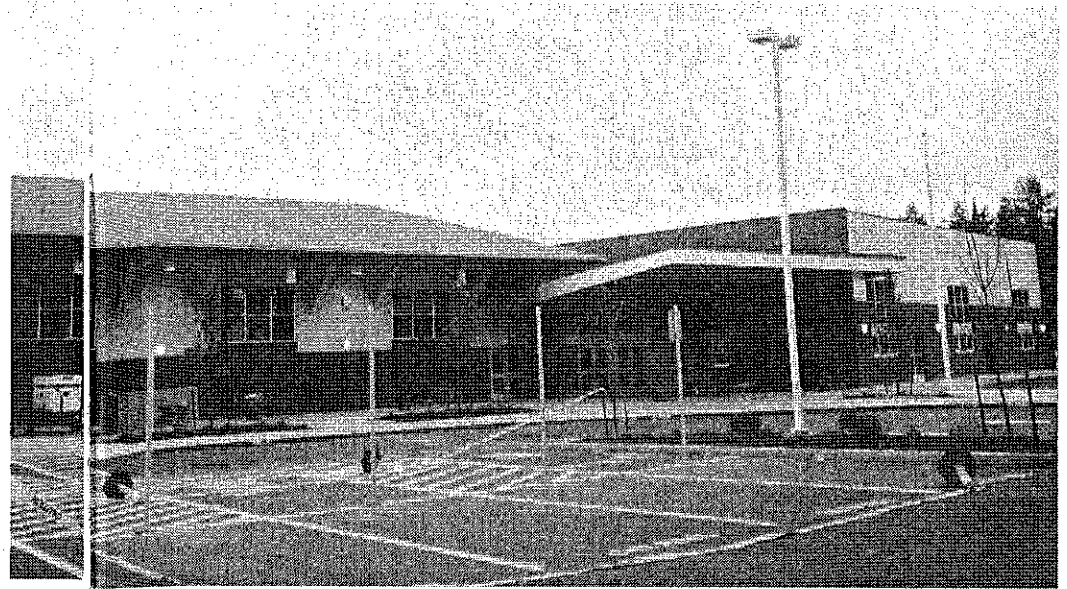
Darin Barnard, First Principal of Alberta Rider School,  
with Tigard-Tualatin School District Superintendent  
Rob Saxton



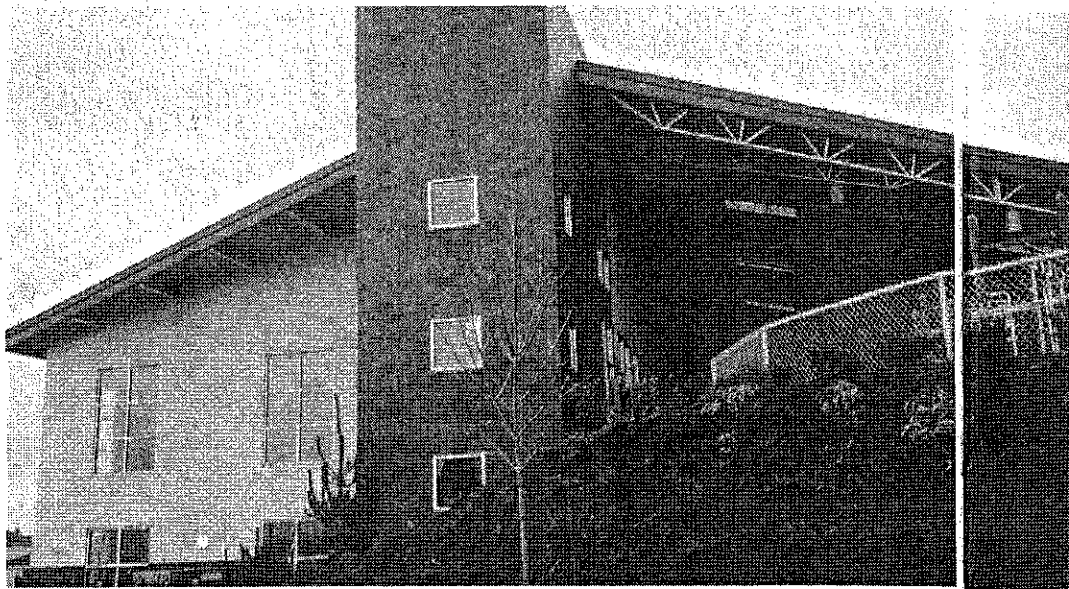
The student body met in portables and a wing of the old Tualatin Elementary School until November, 2005 when Alberta Rider was finished.



Alberta and Construction Superintendent David Haggard



Alberta with Construction Engineer Mike Flannery



**ALBERTA RIDER  
DEAR FRIEND**

**She was an ordinary woman  
She cared not for wealth or fame  
So, why, you ask  
Does our school bear her name?**

**Because she was a lifelong learner  
She gave of herself every day  
Because she was a champion of children  
In an extraordinary way.**

**She understood their tender feelings  
Though not a word they would speak  
It was for the lonely and brokenhearted  
That Alberta would always seek.**

**Her life was one of quiet compassion  
Service done silently on her own  
Her idea of a nice Christmas day  
Was to visit those who were alone.**

**Yes, she was an ordinary woman  
She cared not for wealth or fame  
And now you know why it is so fitting  
That our school bears her name.**

**Sheron Gibb - 2005**



Alberta Rider, age 92, 2005. She said, "Let's hurry up and get this school built - so we can get the children up here."

