

Thank you all for coming today to remember Henry Hansen. I'm Rick Verbeck, married to Henry's oldest granddaughter Karla for 25 years. Many of you here knew Henry for a lot longer than that, but I'd like to begin with a broad picture of his life and hope that others will come forward and share some of their own memories and thoughts.

The one thing I'm sure everyone knew about Henry was that he was a hard worker. He mentioned on many occasions that the Great Depression was a real motivator for this, but surely his early upbringing had a lot of influence. His parents immigrated from Norway, working here to bring other family members over. He lost his mother at an early age. His father was a very strict religious fellow who tolerated few vices. He died when Henry was 15 leaving him on his own to run a farm down in California.

His farm failed, and he came back to Portland to live with friends. He worked at a lot of different jobs over the next decade; an accountant for the S&P Railroad, telegraph operator, auditing assistant, flotation plant worker at a mine in Shasta County, Fuller Brush salesman, and hospital orderly. He liked some of these jobs, was advised he was not right for others, and had some disappear on him due to the depression. He said many times he was lucky he wound up a farmer - something he liked and was good at.

Henry wound up in Sublimity on a whim. He'd decided to take an alternate route back to Portland one day, saw a girl worth stopping for out hoeing in a strawberry field, and decided to ask for work. He didn't get the job right away, but persisted and eventually got both the job and the girl, who was Lois Graen.

Henry and Lois started a farm of their own with the help of neighbor Frank Frazer. Henry described Frank as his complete opposite: a gentle retiring man who preferred sitting and listening to the symphony on the radio with his beer, versus Henry who wanted to spend all his time out getting the fields in shape. Their sharecropping arrangement worked out well, and Frank eventually sold Henry and Lois much of their land.

Henry credited their success to his love for work and Lois's way with managing money. Over the years their farm raised oats, sheep, goats, strawberries, grass seed, Christmas trees, and timber. All were a success except the sheep, which Henry hated. Fortunately, his daughter Mertie came along, and she became his right-hand man in the field and master of the sheep. When Mertie left for college, the sheep went, too.

Lois passed away in 1972, leaving Henry in a state of sorrow. Luckily, while out on a trip a couple years later he met Edna Tucker, whom he later married. Edna has a quiet intelligence and a very kind and understanding nature, which was a good balance for Henry's sometimes loudly stated opinions. They built a new home on the farm; Henry continued working, now spending a lot of time converting fields into forest land.

Hard work is a necessity for a good farmer, but Henry was also good at looking for new things to learn and try out. He was innovative on his own, too, always looking for a way to make a job or tool work out better. Despite his frequent jabs at me for being too worried about the details, he spent a lot of time himself with documents and bookwork to verify that what he was trying would pay off.

Henry also had a healthy amount of self-confidence. He wasn't a braggart;

when he did some self-promotion you could be sure that he'd gone and done the work first to justify it.

He liked the notoriety of working with government agencies or industry groups if they had something he could test on his farm. Many of these were successful, and he received several rewards for his cooperative efforts. He also liked the pictures that were taken and the press articles, but if you look closely you'll see he didn't get involved with things that didn't mean something to him.

Henry also wasn't afraid to mention when one of these innovations didn't work out. If it didn't pay off, he was willing to let it go.

People who have a lot of self confidence and are right most of the time like to share their good advice, and Henry was very sharing in this area. It seems it's a grandfather's prerogative to tell you all the things that your parents didn't get around to telling you quickly enough.

I think Henry would have died a poor man if he'd had to give each of us a nickel for every time he told us "You're doing that wrong".

"You need some horse sense along with that book learning" was another favorite of Henry's.

There were others, including the memorable, "2,4-D is good for you, look how long I've lived", and "if you eat enough garlic you'll never have a cold". This last advice about garlic may be true; Henry was always putting garlic on something to eat, and it was his most important crop in the garden. The garlic on the flower arrangement is in honor of Henry's love for it, not due to any problems with vampires around here.

It can be a real danger living too close to someone who likes to give advice. Karla and I lived on the farm for a time in the 80's, and it can sometimes be an unwelcome surprise to a young couple when Grandpa walks in the back door with some special advice that won't wait for knocking. In fact, it was amazing how often you could be in a remote corner of the farm doing something you didn't particularly want seen and suddenly hear that blue pickup coming around the corner.

There were some things that Henry didn't have as much confidence for, though. He always wanted a Mercedes, but just was never ready to pull up at the Grange in a foreign car. After 50 years in the community he was still a little worried about being thought of as a city slicker.

He also was a bit wary of family relationships. I remember once he and I were working outside somewhere and he decided to go to our house and get some coffee from Karla. Karla, in the meantime had put a note on the door saying, "Mom and baby asleep - please come back later". He came right back to me without any coffee, saying to me, "Your wife left me a note to go to hell". Karla and I laughed about it later, but I think he was really a bit hurt.

There are some things that no one likes to be reminded of, of course, like when you flip the tractor over. Once we determined that he and the tractor were okay we had a good laugh, then quickly pulled it back over before Edna or Karla found out.

There was also the Christmas tree shearing lesson, where the granddaughters were buckled into their safety gear and watched Grandpa complete his lesson by

accidentally sinking the shearing knife deep into his leg. He recounted that story painfully every time he ran across the leg guards out in his shop

Henry did enjoy humor a lot, though, and had his own special brand. His son-in-law found this out after an argument with Henry over whether there was any such thing as a boomer. One day he found a strange critter on the hood of his car, and Henry said, "Oh, that must be one of those imaginary creatures you don't believe in".

I'd like to finish up mentioning some things that Henry liked.

He did like working on the farm and in the woods; I'm sure Edna will attest that he was at his crankiest when he was laid-up and couldn't get out and work.

He liked thinking over and discussing issues, whether it was politics, economics, or just life. I would occasionally get a call from Henry with a well thought-out explanation of why I was wrong on some issue we'd talked about, and knew he'd been thinking it over for several days in the woods.

Travel was a favorite with Henry, whether by car, plane or train. He made several visits to Europe, Asia, and New Zealand.

Henry liked his bulldozer. No one else got to use it, and he would go well out of his way to find things he could do with it.

He liked playing baseball, and we hear he did a lot of it in his early days. His interest waned in later years, possibly because his daughter cheats outrageously.

He liked dogs a lot, though typically when other people weren't watching.

He also liked giving to charities, and made frequent contributions to a variety of them in the area. His favorite was to supply free Christmas trees, especially to churches. His plan was that he would supply some to all denominations and earn points just in case he was attending the wrong one.

I'm happy to report that his plan worked, and it's nearly certain that he got into where he wanted to be. Unfortunately, I am not allowed to disclose which denomination got him the winning ticket.

Henry Hansen had a good life - 96 years old this year. Born on tax day, which he hated, and a peaceful death on the 4th of July. We had a good fireworks show in his honor this year, and plan to from now on.