

June Gillespie, not a June bride!

(Interview done October 12, 2005 by Bonnie LaDoe)



Imagine for a moment that you have your wedding all planned. The cake is delivered, the out of town guests have arrived, and all the food is prepared. Then at the rehearsal the day before the wedding folks say, “June, why is your face so red”. Well, she didn’t know it then, but the next morning, June 10, 1939, her planned wedding day, the doctor told her, “June, you’ve got scarlet fever”.

So instead of a wedding at the house near 68th and Stanton where June grew up, she and her mother were quarantined for six weeks! While her father and husband-to-be had to stay away. And that’s why June became a July bride. She and Bob Gillespie were wed July 15, 1939 at Faith Lutheran Church and had been married 60 years when Bob died in 1999.

June had come to Portland with her parents, Elizabeth and Fredric Schroetlin and her mother’s parents Fred and Christina Allmaras. Mr. Schroetlin transferred with the railroad from Bremen, ND, where June was born in 1914. The two families settled on 7th and Fremont where June started school at Albina Homestead.

In 1921 each family purchased 50 x 100 lots for \$300 each on 68th just south of Stanton and built their identical homes next to each other in 1922. And it is in one of these houses that 91-year-old June still lives.

So, how have things changed in the neighborhood? Well, do you have a cow grazing on the property next door? Do you have an errant elephant from the circus at the race track (now Rose City Golf Course) in your backyard eating vegetables and breaking down clotheslines? Can you gather hazelnuts from brush along Sacramento? Can you walk to Kuenzli’s on 68th and

Sacramento and buy fresh eggs? These are just some of the memories that June has after residing in Roseway for 84 years.

June might be very wealthy today if her grandfather had kept the land he purchased from Mr. Kuenzli – from 68th and Sacramento to 82nd including where Madison Hi is now. But a poor crop in North Dakota meant that taxes couldn't be paid, so the land went back to the State of Oregon.

June and her sister, Mae, attended Gregory Heights School where June graduated in 1928. A slender 98 pounds, June was very athletic and won several blue ribbons in track before entering athletics at Grant High where she graduated in 1932.

June can remember all the business on the south side of Sandy Blvd between 68th and 69th. They were Bellcrest Grocery, Rothenberger's Shoes, a real estate office, a boat shop, a jeweler, George's Market, Davis Drug, and a little mom and pop grocery called Swanson's. They had pickle and peanut butter barrels out front charging 5 cents a pickle. Once, as a kid, June stuck her finger in the peanut butter, and the storeowner called her parents and said they had "better watch her".

She can recall Dr. Nygard and Dr. Milne, dentists, with offices above Fairleys, and a Dr. Miller who had his office at Mrs. Hall's in a big house next to the Presbyterian Church (about where Papa Murphy's is now). And the Acker family who owned a big house on 70th and Sandy. (If you know of any photos of these long gone houses, please let us know.)

Now days, June's pride and joy is her grandson, Cole Gillespie, a senior at Oregon State University and captain of the baseball team.

June's extraordinary memory of the neighborhood is our good fortune and we thank her for being interviewed.

Note: June passed away on August 3, 2009