

Three Embarrassing Moments for Gladys Downes

DeLoss Downes, Storyteller

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

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Story #1 This is Thoburn DeLoss Downs and I would like to tell you what conditions and things was like here in early Oregon. We moved here in 1944 during World War II. When we got here to Oregon, we found out that it is quite primitive conditions. The place that we bought was a fifteen-acre ranch, cherry orchard and it had a small house on it. The house had three bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and dinette combined. The only separation between the living room half of the house and the kitchen half was an open space there was no doors so we would rig up a curtain there whenever we wouldbecause when we took a bath we had to take our bath in the kitchen. It was the closest place to the hot water. Beings that we had no electricity and no running water, we used kerosene lamps and in order to take a bath we would set this large washtub on the floor in the kitchen and we would fill it with warm water that we took off the wood stove to heat the water up with. Well, we had a neighbor, he was an old bachelor and he use to come around quite often. His name was Roy Peterson. We used to tense my mother a lot. About the time she was ready to take a bath we would tell her that Roy Peterson was coming to kind of scare her a little bit. We would tease our mother in that manner. Well this one time, Tina and I were outside, we just got done cutting & stacking some wood and Roy Peterson came over and I knew my mother was in the kitchen taking a bath. So I hollered toward the kitchen, hollered toward the house. I told her Roy Peterson was here. Well, my mother thought we was teasing her so she hollered out, come on in Roy. Roy opened the door and started to walk in. He got the door open and that as far as he got. There sat my mother in the tub with no clothes on. It was pretty embarrassing to my mother but I think it embarrassed Roy Peterson more because from that time on my mother was known as a hussy. And Roy kind of quit coming around after that.

Story #2 My mom had quite a few things happen to her that was embarrassing. One day when she in town in Grants Pass, she had just finished doing some banking, had left the bank and was walking down 6th street with a friend of hers when the elastic in her underpants broke. She got that let down feeling real fast and there wasn't much she could do to stop it. Back in those days, the women wore long skirts, they called them the middies. They were between the knee and the ankle. Probably more closer to the ankle in length. When her pants dropped down, she just kind of stepped out of them and kept going like nothing happened, leaving her underpants there on the sidewalk.

Story #3 One other time, she had a very embarrassing moment. She went to town to do some banking. She had my baby sister with her, Sharon. There is 14 years difference between the two youngest ones in the family, my brother being the youngest. Sharon came along 14 years later. Well, it was kind of cold upstairs where Sharon use to sleep so mom kept a chamber pot underneath Sharon's bed. That way when Sharon had to get up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, she didn't have to run all the way downstairs. All she had to do was get up, pull the chamber pot out from under the bed and do her job and fall back into bed. Well, this one day when she went banking, Sharon was probably about three to four years old, and she was pretty well steeped in using the chamber pot at night. Anyway, my mother went banking and she was

talking to the teller and my sister had to go to the bathroom. So, she was pulling on mom's dress to get her attention. Well, my mother didn't want to be distracted by her so she kept pushing her off. Finally she heard everybody laughing in the bank and she turned around to see what everyone was laughing at. Well, in the bank they had these spittoons sitting on the floor next to the counters and stuff. They had sand in them to where you could put out your cigarettes, stub your cigarettes out in the sand in these spittoons. Well, Sharon saw those spittoons and she thought they was a chamber pot just like to one she had at home, so she pulled up her dress and dropped her draws and was sitting there grunting, doing her big job. And people in the bank started laughing at it. My mother heard the laughing and she looking around to see what everyone was laughing at, and there was Sharon sitting on that spittoon, red in the face from grunting, doing her big job in the spittoon. And it embarrassed my mother so much that she didn't even go take care of Sharon. She headed out the door cause my dad was sitting in the car out in the parking lot. And she got in the car and told Dad to go in and pickup his daughter, that she was too embarrassed. So, my dad had to go in the bank and claim his daughter. And that's about the most embarrassing thing that happened, but that story was sent into Reader's Digest onetime by one of the neighbors and it did get printed in the Reader's Digest as one of their comical stories.