

**Queen Charlotte Cannon and
Grand Marshal Bob Cannon
Umatilla County Pioneer Days Royalty**

Queen Charlotte Cannon



Queen Charlotte was born to Laura and Fred Gross on their homestead west of Athena, Oregon. She had a brother, George, and a half sister, Verva. Her grandparents were George and Sarah Jane Gross, and John and Emily Keen. The two families never missed the Pioneer Picnic.

George and Sarah Jane homesteaded six miles west of Athena in Sand Hollow Flat north of Adams, Oregon. They proved up their homestead and received their government patent on June 30, 1893, from President Benjamin Harrison. They had four children, and lived there until their son was old enough to take over the farm and then moved to Athena.

Mr. Gross was involved in all city activities. At one time he served as Mayor, and previously had been Umatilla County Assessor. He and Hugh Worthington built the brick building located at 244 SW Main Street in Athena. His son, Fred, with his team of horses and wagon hauled the brick from the Weston Brick Yard. Charlotte's Great Grandfather, Andy Gross, hired the Hansell Construction Company to build "The St. Nichols Hotel" in 1888. The wooden building is located on the corner of

Main Street and 3rd Street in Athena. They lived there for three years. When his wife died, he returned to the Willamette Valley.

John and Emily Keen settled in Gerking Flat Northwest of Athena. They proved up their 60 acre homestead and received the government patent on August 8, 1892 from President Benjamin Harrison. In later years they purchased 640 acres on Weston Mountain or summer pasture for their cattle. Many families moved north of the Keens establishing their own homes on Gerking Flat.

Mr. Keen was every active in the community. The Union School District No. 52 was activated about one mile north of the Keen homestead. Besides being a school, this building was used for church services and community affairs. Laura Keen attended this school and many years later, Queen Charlotte had her first three years of schooling there. Miss Daisy Waddingham, from Weston, was her teacher. Ms Waddingham boarded with Laura and Fred Gross. During this time Ms. Waddingham was being courted by Fred Hendricks.

Soon after Charlotte graduated from Athena High School, she married Claude Dickenson. They moved to the Dickenson farm at Wayland Station north of Athena. For ten years they lived there helping his father and farming the DeFreece and Effinger farms. In 1938, they moved to the Henry Keen farm at Gerking Flat. They continued to farm until 1964, when they retired and moved to Athena. Years later, she married Granville Cannon.

Charlotte is a member of the St. James Episcopal Church in Milton-Freewater. The church building will be remembered as "The All Saints Episcopal Church," formally located on NW Main Street in

Weston. It was moved to Milton in 1943. The same podium, organ and pews are still being used in the church today.

Queen Charlotte has been a resident of Umatilla County all of her life, except the three years as a very small child when her parents farmed in Alberta, Canada.

Biographical information provided by Charlotte Cannon.

Grand Marshal Bob Cannon

The Cannon Family has been around the Athena-Weston area for four generations. My dad Joe Cannon raised potatoes on Weston Mountain and may have participated in the Potato Show before he moved to the Athena area in 1923.

I was born in the same bed I now sleep in because in those days doctors came on house calls. I was born in 1925. I had two brothers and one sister. Granville, Francis, Woody and little Robert made up the Joe Cannon family.

I went to a one room school in Gerking Flat until all that was left was me, so they closed the school and I rode bus to the Athena school starting in the fifth grade.

I drove a team of mules one whole summer when I was fourteen and have farmed all the rest of my life.

My senior year of high school I was drafted into the Navy, took boots in Fargut, Idaho and was sent to Oklahoma to be trained as an aviation mechanic. Twenty-one weeks later I transferred to turret gunman and went to Florida for training.

I came home on leave from Florida and married Dorothy Holderied which was the best thing I ever did in my life! We lived in Fargut, Idaho and guarded German prisoners until the war was over. I spent two and a half years in the service.

Dorothy and I have three children: Sharon, Bob and Dave Cannon. Sharon lives in Oklahoma, Bob is a State Patrol in The Dalles and Dave farms with me.

I have seen many changes in farming over the years and hope to see a few more. To receive a price for wheat that is over the cost of production would be nice.

It is an honor and a pleasure to be your Grand Marshal for the year 2000 and I would like to thank you all who had a part in choosing me.

---Written by Bob Cannon