

= Harry Randall Truman =

Harry Randall Truman (October 30 , 1896 ? May 18 , 1980) was a resident of the U.S. state of Washington who lived on Mount St. Helens . He came to brief fame in the months preceding the volcano 's 1980 eruption after he stubbornly refused to leave his home despite evacuation orders , and he is presumed to have been killed in the eruption . He was the owner and caretaker of Mount St. Helens Lodge at Spirit Lake , located at the south end of Spirit Lake at the foot of the mountain in the danger zone at the time of the eruption .

After Truman 's death , his family and friends reflected on his love for the mountain . He was commemorated in a book by his niece and a song by Headgear . In 1981 , Art Carney portrayed Truman in the docu @-@ drama film St. Helens .

= = Life = =

Truman was born in Ivydale , Clay County , West Virginia , to Rosa Belle (née Hardman ; 1873 ? 1957) and Newberry Truman (1874 ? 1923) . His family settled in Chehalis , Washington several years later , where his father died in a logging camp accident in 1923 , aged 49 . He had one sister , Geraldine (1905 ? 1987) .

Truman enlisted in the 100th Aero Squadron ? 7th Squad of United States Army as a private on August 4 , 1917 . Several months later , he survived the torpedoing of the Tuscania on February 5 , 1918 , off the coast of Ireland . After the incident , Truman was honorably discharged from military service on June 12 , 1919 . He lived in Riffe , Washington , until 1926 , when he became caretaker of the Mount St. Helens Lodge at the foot of Mount St. Helens beside Spirit Lake . In 1928 Truman bought a half interest in the lodge , later that same year he bought the other half . At the time of his death , Truman had operated the lodge for 52 years . He was also a member of the Tuscania Survivors Association from 1938 until his death .

Truman was married three times : to Helen Irene (née Hughes) , Marjorie (née Bennett) , and Edna O. (née Henrickson) . It is not clear when he married or separated from Hughes , but he married Bennett in 1935 and Henrickson in 1947 .

= = Celebrity = =

He became a minor celebrity during the two months of volcanic activity preceding the eruption , giving interviews to reporters and expressing his opinion that the danger from the volcano was exaggerated , saying , " I don 't have any idea whether it will blow [...] But I don 't believe it to the point that I 'm going to pack up . " Truman discarded all of his concerns about the volcano and his situation , stating " If the mountain goes , I 'm going with it . This area is heavily timbered , Spirit Lake is in between me and the mountain , and the mountain is a mile away , the mountain ain 't gonna hurt me ... boy . " According to The Bulletin , he responded to being knocked from his bed by precursor earthquakes by moving his mattress to his basement . At one point , Truman " scoffed " at the public 's concern for his safety . He became something of a " folk hero " and from March until May , was the subject of many songs and poems by children . One group of children from Salem , Oregon , sent him banners inscribed " Harry - We Love You " , while Truman received fan letters including several marriage proposals .

= = Death = =

Truman was alone at his lodge when he is presumed to have died in the eruption on May 18 . A pyroclastic flow engulfed the Spirit Lake area , destroying the lake and burying the site of his lodge under 150 feet (46 m) of volcanic landslide debris . A new lake eventually formed on a much higher elevation .

His sister Geraldine expressed that she found it hard to accept the reality of his death , commenting , " I don 't think he made it . But I thought if they would let me fly over and see for myself that Harry

's lodge is gone , then maybe I 'd believe it for sure . "

The 1980 event was the deadliest and most destructive volcanic eruption in the recorded history of the continental United States of America . A total of 57 people are known to have died , and more were left homeless when the ash falls and pyroclastic flows destroyed or buried 200 houses . In addition to Truman , photojournalist Reid Blackburn , volcanologist David A. Johnston and photographer Robert Landsburg were killed .

= = Legacy = =

Truman had already emerged as a " folk hero " for his resistance to the evacuation efforts prior to his death . After his death , his friends and family , including his sister , Geraldine (Geri) , reflected on his death . Geri commented , " He was a very opinionated person . " Friend John Garrity added , " The mountain and the lake were his life . If he 'd left and then saw what the mountain did to his lake , it would have killed him anyway . He always said he wanted to die at Spirit Lake . He went the way he wanted to go . " Another friend , John Andersen , said , " Harry 's name and Harry 's presence will always be a part of that (Spirit Lake) . There can be no finer memorial . " Truman 's cousin Richard Ice commented that Truman " was not only a fast talker but loud . He had an opinion on all subjects and a definite one . " Ice also added that Truman 's short period of life as a celebrity was " the peak of his life . "

Truman was the subject of the book Truman of St. Helens : The Man and His Mountain written by his niece Shirley Rosen and was portrayed by Art Carney in the 1981 docu @-@ drama film St. Helens . He is the subject of the song " Harry Truman " written and recorded by Irish band Headgear , which features the refrain , " You can move the mountain but I 'm never coming down " . Another song about Harry was written by Lula Belle Garland called " The Legend of Harry And The Mountain . " It was recorded in 1980 by Ron Shaw & The Desert Wind Band .

More recently , singer @-@ songwriter and family entertainer Billy Jonas included Truman 's story in his song " Old St. Helen " , recorded in 2002 .

Truman Trail and Harry 's Ridge in the Mount St. Helens region are named after him . He was also famous for owning 16 cats , which he considered family , and mentioned in almost all public statements he made . The cats are presumed to have died with Truman on the day of the eruption .