



The Orcas Islander

Newsletter of the Orcas Island Historical Society – Fall 2013

"We educate, inspire, connect and involve our community and visitors as stewards of island history."

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COMING SOON

Our series of Monthly Historical Matinees will continue throughout the Autumn-Winter Season. Every 3rd Sunday of the month at the Orcas Island Senior Center.

Thanks to everyone who attended our 6th Annual "Cruise Into History"



A view from the stern



Guide Tom Welch expounds of the views

NEW MUSEUM HOURS

Oct 5th - May 25th

Wednesday – Saturday, 12pm – 3pm

The office will be open 10.30am to 3.30pm on these days

We will also take appointments for visitors

Crow Valley School will be open by appointment only

Executive Corner

Dear Members and Friends of the Museum,

As the busy season comes to an end we are focusing on the recruitment of volunteer board members for the upcoming year. Being a board member means using your talents and expertise to provide leadership, guidance and new ideas for the perseveration and development of the museum. Our board is comprised of members of the community with expertise in a range of fields, and we would particularly like to encourage individuals with a background in education, technology, community outreach and business leadership to apply.

Since 2006 OIHM has been slowly but surely paying off the debt incurred by a major building project that connects the old museum building to our new administrative offices. What was once a loan of more than \$100,000 is now approximately \$41,000. Recently we were delighted to have received pledges of \$13,000 to kick start a campaign to pay off the total remaining balance, after which the museum will be free of debt. We will be announcing the details of the campaign in the near future and we would appreciate any thoughts, ideas and help (financial or otherwise!) towards this goal. Please contact James Lobdell by email at jlobdell000@centurytel.net or phone 376-4287.

James, Jim and Patti, Leadership Team

OIHM Applies for and Receives Historic Preservation Grant

In May our Curator, Clark McAbee, drafted and submitted an Historic Preservation Grant to San Juan County in order to make repairs and improvements to our collection of historic cabins, which house many of our treasured historical artifacts. The total estimated budget for this project is \$3300 and the grant request was for \$2200. We are delighted to announce that the County awarded us \$1950.00 on July 16th with a contract to be tendered at a later date. These funds will be used for moisture mitigation and epoxy timber repair, including repair of some log crowns and saddle notches which will halt and mitigate moisture damage. Additionally a leaking gutter will be replaced and rerouted to reduce rainfall run off on cabin roofs.

The Orcas Island Historical Museum is very thankful for the continued support of the San Juan Island County Commissioners.

Washington Rural Heritage supports Geoghegan Digitization Project

We are pleased to announce that the Orcas Island Library has received a grant from the Washington State Library to digitize one hundred photographs from our extensive collection of negatives taken by local photographer James T. Geoghegan. This effort is part of Washington Rural Heritage, a collaborative digitization project that brings together resources from heritage organizations and private collections across the state.

This is the second time that the Library and Museum have collaborated in such an effort. As this project prepares to get underway, the Museum is seeking additional funds to pay for equipment and supplies so that our volunteer project manager Edrie Vinson can print archival copies of the fragile nitrate negatives as they are scanned.

We are looking for sponsors for each of these important projects. If you are interested in supporting our work please contact the museum at 376 4849 or email info@orcasmuseum.org

Crow Valley School turns 125!



Friend and volunteer Margot Shaw plays the part of Grace See, a Crow Valley School teacher in 1893. Photo by Carol Kulminski.

This year we celebrate 125 years of an Island icon, Crow Valley School. Originally called Pleasant Valley, the school was built in 1888, on an acre of land donated by settler Peter Frechette. Students from grades one through eight were taught in the school house, which saw an average of 27 students per year.

The school was closed in 1918, after which students attended the consolidated Eastsound School. The building continued to be used as a community meeting place, including use as a church and a Sunday School. In 1987 the school house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Shortly later it was painstakingly restored over hundreds of hours by Richard Schneider and Bud McBride, the founders of Crow Valley Pottery, who later won an award for their work.

Crow Valley School is one of the finest examples of an intact one room school house in our state. It is one of the highlights of OIHM, and is open to visitors during the summer (and by appointment in winter,)

Flotsam and Jetsam

Or, How on Earth did this end up on Orcas Island?



Photo # NH 48619 USS *Maine* (1895-1898)
Image courtesy of Naval History and Heritage



Photo #: NH 61236 USS *Maine* Destroyed by Fire
Image courtesy of Naval History and Heritage

Working in the museum archives cataloging the photos and artifacts gathered during the organization's sixty plus years of existence (more if you count Ethan Allen's collecting a century ago) I am often struck both by the variety and oddity of some of these objects. Previously I discussed the wooden trim piece from the historic Steamship *Beaver* that came to us in the collection of John Walsh. This column I will discuss another intriguing nautical object that begs the question in the title. First a little bit of background on John Walsh. To date I have not discovered too much information on Sgt. Walsh. We have a beautifully framed "Cruise" photo of Sgt. John Walsh in his Army uniform commemorating his cruise to the Far East. It features flags of many nations including Japan, Australia, China, and other Asian nations that Sgt. Walsh saw aboard the United States Army Transport *Crook*.

What is this unique object? The accession list from 1958 says: *I police club from the 'Maine'.*

Maine would be the U.S. S. Maine battleship of "Remember the Maine" fame, the battle cry that helped precipitate the Spanish American War. "While the cause of this great tragedy is still unsettled, contemporary American popular opinion blamed Spain, and war followed within a few months. *Maine's* wreck was raised in 1912 to clear the harbor and to facilitate an investigation into the cause of her sinking. Her remains were subsequently scuttled in deep waters north of Havana."

The object itself is clearly a "Billy club" or Shore Patrol baton used to enforce discipline ashore and afloat among unruly sailors of many navies. One has to wonder how the good Sergeant obtained this item. If truly authentic it is a remarkable memorial to an infamous event in American history Sgt. John Walsh's collection has a myriad of other unique objects as well including a hand carved violin. Perhaps we shall do an exhibit on this theme in 2014.

Clark McAbee

⇒ Special Thanks ⇐

To **Natalie Baloy** for her wonderful work as our summer office administrative support. We are sorry to lose her, but wish her the best of luck with writing her thesis and a promising new teaching position.

To **Shannon Borg** and **Kristen Anna** for working as volunteers at Salish Feast. You were very much appreciated and we look forward to working with you again soon!

To **Orcas Eclipse Charters** and **Tom Welch** for providing a fun and interesting tour of the island aboard the *Eclipse*, for our 6th Annual Cruise into History.

To **Iris Parker-Pavitt**, our fantastic summer intern, for her work across a number of projects, and her willingness to learn new tasks and get stuck in wherever she was needed. Best of luck at college this year!

To **Nate, Becca** and **Jim** of Island Hopping Brewery, for their generous donation of delicious ales for our Historical Days Celebration.

To our **New Members** Louise Smith, Babs Tatalias, Kristine Power, Boyd Pratt, Ken Carrasco, Stan Liebenberg and Dick Staub.

Orcas Island Historical Society

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stamp

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Honor a memory - Leave an impression
Buy a brick in our
commemorative walkway today.

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