

News Notes Washington State Historical Society

BRUCE LE ROY, *Editor*

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No. 1



FISHING RACCOONS Taxidermy — John Gipple, Art — Kenn Johnson
Natural History, Washington State Historical Society Museum

The Washington State Historical Society is located at 315 North Stadium Way, Tacoma 98403. The telephone number is FULTON 3-2509. The five-floor museum, which is Society headquarters is open Tuesday through Saturday, 9 - 5, Sunday, 2 - 5. Closed Mondays.

The Washington State Historical Society

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CASTING WEHN BRONZES

Two famous figures have been placed on display in the museum. They are the busts of Isaac I. Stevens and Dr. John McLoughlin, Washington's first Territorial Governor and the Factor of Fort Vancouver. These are the first items from the great James Wehn Collection of Historic Sculpture to arrive. As was announced in the last issue of NEWS NOTES, more than 200 pieces of sculpture, medallions and plaques will be displayed eventually when the new wing is ready to receive them.

The project of casting in bronze all the items in the Wehn Collection is an expensive one. The Society must raise at least \$50,000 to complete the job. If anyone wants to make a permanent contribution to historical preservation, he may volunteer to assist financially in this project. Some items can be cast for less than \$100. Others run to several hundred dollars. Your attention and help is solicited.

THE MERRICK STORY

From the estates of the late Misses Jessie and Gladys Merrick, the museum has been given historic colonial furniture which was used on the great Mississippi steamboats of the mid nineteenth century. Captain George B. Merrick was a contemporary of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain to his readers), who was a pilot on the Mississippi River. Many artifacts of historical value related to the Merrick family in the Pacific Northwest are included. Captain Merrick's autobiography and relevant pictures were donated earlier.

Alaska Centennial Mural

A mural showing the Hudson's Bay Company Steamship "Beaver" off Stella-oom City in the 1850's has been on display as part of Alaska's celebration of its centennial. The painting by Kenn Johnson has traveled throughout Alaska during this historic year and has been seen by many thousands. Fortunately, the painting escaped the ravages of the Fairbanks flood and will arrive in Tacoma shortly. Eventually the mural will adorn the exhibit of "The Boiler of the Beaver".

COMMITTEE ON STATUARY HALL

President Reno Odlin has been asked by Governor Daniel J. Evans to establish a committee of citizens from around the state who will be considering nominations for the State's second historical figure to stand in the national capitol. Dr. Marcus Whitman has stood alone for many years to represent the State of Washington in Statuary Hall. The committee names will be announced shortly. Nominations will then be accepted from any citizen of the state for consideration and recommendation by the Committee to the Governor. It is hoped that the next Legislature will be able to take action on the final nomination. Anyone with suggestions at this point is requested to send his nomination to The Washington State Historical Society, attention the Director.

EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Mr. John E. Wickman, Director of the Eisenhower Library, was a recent visitor to the museum. He examined the original manuscript of the address given by President Eisenhower to the Colombo Conference in Seattle in 1959. Pictures of the then Col. Eisenhower, taken at Fort Lewis in 1940, are being copied for the Eisenhower Library in Abilene. One interesting possibility is that an unidentified colonel leaning confidentially over visiting President Franklin D. Roosevelt was Eisenhower. Several pictures of General Eisenhower's visit to West Point and Hyde Park in 1945, which were taken by Mr. Le Roy at the time of the visit, are also to be copied. A young soldier at West Point was photographing more history than he knew in 1945!

NEW WING FUND DRIVE

Our goal for funds to build a new wing on the museum was set at \$500,000. Of this amount \$339,000 was required by the law which provided a matching fund from the State. The remaining figure — \$161,000—is a minimum required for equipping the new wing.

We are happy to announce that we

have received in pledges and donations more than enough to meet the State's matching requirement. Friends of the Society will be pleased to hear that major contributions have been given from all over the United States. Before the drive ends we expect to have received contributions and grants from at least a dozen states. *May we again urge all members and friends of the Society to make their pledges now.* The future of The Washington State Historical Society, its museum and program, depend upon you. Our deepest thanks to all of you who have already responded.

The Ginther Collection

A marvelous series of 80 watercolors depicting the depression years on Puget Sound has been added to our archives. Painted by Ronald V. Ginther, of Seattle, these unique pictures depict bread lines, strikes, Hoovervilles, and all of the miseries prevalent at the time.

The Society owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. J. S. Holliday, Associate Editor of *The American West*. Mr. Holliday's efforts on behalf of our Society can never be fully repaid. It is a pleasure to know that he has just accepted an appointment as Director of the Oakland Art Museum which will be opening its \$6 million plus, museum, in about a year.

NEW INVENTORY LISTS

Frank Green, our Librarian, has completed an inventory of the papers of Ralph Chaplin which will be published soon. The list will be distributed to colleges, universities and other museums. Thus, the riches of labor history in the Chaplin Collection will become more widely known to students and researchers.

Also underway are inventories of the papers of former Senator Harry P. Cain and the extensive collection of papers of Ezra Meeker, perennial pioneer of Washington history. These, too, may be published and distributed, as we plan to do with the Chaplin Inventory.

Historic Sketches

Fifty-nine pen and ink sketches by Rubie Pederson Johnson, primarily showing historic sites and buildings around the Steilacoom and Tacoma area, have been received. Mrs. Johnson, formerly a librarian in Pierce County, is now a resident of California. The sketches could be reproduced as delightful Christmas cards. Don't be surprised if we issue them in plenty of time for Christmas, 1968! The collection was brought to Tacoma by Mr. Edward Shell, art consultant for the museum, who called upon Mrs. Johnson—at our request.

SHELBANKS LOCAL HISTORY MEETING

18 local historical societies sent delegates to the Local History Conference at our new historic site at Shelbanks on September 30, 1967. Despite inclement weather, a good and rewarding time was had by all. Speakers included many of the top professional people in the Pacific Northwest. Subjects covered included fund drives for the local society, accessions programs, historical libraries, historical publications, etc.

Another program is, hopefully, to be scheduled for late spring. The invitations and publicity will be forthcoming shortly after the first of the year. These workshop programs are planned to provide the best professional advice available to the members of the local historical society museums in the State of Washington.

The Charles M. Gates Memorial Award

The award for the most distinguished contribution to the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* was announced at the Shelbanks Local History Conference in September. The third annual winner was Hamilton Cravens, instructor in history at Ohio State University. His article was "The Emergence of the Farmer Labor Party in Washington Politics,

1919-1920". Since Mr. Cravens was unable to be present, the award was accepted for him by Dr. Vernon Carstensen, professor of history at the University of Washington.

To refresh your memory, the prize consists of a Certificate of Recognition and a \$100 savings bond. To be eligible, writers for the "Quarterly" must not hold rank higher than assistant professor. Academic status is not a requirement. The purpose of the Gates Award is to stimulate better historical articles from individuals who have yet to achieve full professional recognition.

EARLY MORMON HISTORY

An original manuscript containing first-hand knowledge of the early beginnings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been given to The Washington State Historical Society by a descendant of Signey Rigdon. John W. Rigdon, the son of Sidney Rigdon, tells the story of his father's contributions as one of Joseph Smith's closest associates.

The Rigdon manuscript describes the horror of the persecution and massacre of the Mormons during the westward trek. It details Rigdon's unsuccessful bid to become President of the Mormon Church following the death of Joseph Smith. Despite the power struggle between his father and Brigham Young, John sympathized with the Church's decision to make Young the President.

The Mormon story is not limited by any means to Utah, despite popular misconceptions. Mormon contributions played and continue to play a strong part in the development of Pacific Northwest history.

Ralph Chaplin

Our late research consultant, Ralph Chaplin, will be honored by two stories in *The American West* magazine in January, 1968. A biographical memoir by Bruce Le Roy introduces Ralph's last thoughts on the history of the labor movement. In the last few months of his life, Ralph was persuaded to write an essay called "Why I Wrote 'Solidarity Forever'". In it he sums up his ideas about the changes in the American labor movement which had occurred since the long ago time when he composed the theme song of American Labor—"Solidarity Forever". The article has considerable significance because it is the only substantial published addendum to Chaplin's autobiography "Wobbly".

SHELBANKS IN HISTORY

Three beautiful watercolors which create a chronological story of the development of our new historic site at Shelbanks have been completed by Kenn Johnson. The paintings will be displayed in the museum for a time and then will be hung at Shelbanks.

The first picture shows the beginnings of Shelbanks. Indians on the beach are smoking salmon. As with the others, much ethnological research went into this creation.

In the second picture, one of the first skid roads in Kitsap County is shown. Ox teams haul logs to the beach on a path where the present entrance and driveway are located.

The third painting is a scene from the days when Shelbanks was a girls' summer camp. The beach is a bustle of activity, as might be expected when teenagers take over.

The fourth painting, which will complete the series, will be of lovely Shelbanks as it appears today.

Fort Nisqually Swivel Gun

An extremely rare Hudson's Bay Company swivel gun, used at Fort Nisqually in the 1830's and 40's, weighing 40 pounds, has once again been placed on display in the museum. Francis Federico, of Tacoma, has spent the past three years restoring the piece. The gun was completely rebuilt, all parts being fashioned by Federico except the original gun stock and barrel. Used extensively in the northwest fur trade and Indian skirmishes, the gun could shoot anything from rocks to nails. Designed originally for use on a boat's gunwale or from a fortification, it is, so far as we know, the only such Hudson's Bay Company weapon displayed in a western museum.

Members Wanted

We urge any of our members who are concerned to broaden their participation in the local history movement to consider joining two very worthwhile organizations. They are "The American Association For State and Local History" and "The Western History Association".

Both of these organizations publish a variety of helpful items of considerable interest to one working with history. Membership applications to the AASLH may be addressed to 132 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee 37203. Applications to The Western History Association may be addressed to Arrell M. Gibson, Secretary-Treasurer, Faculty exchange, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma 73069. Each organization holds an annual national conference. The Western History Association Conference for 1968 will be held in Tucson, Arizona on October 17, 18 and 19.

ART CALENDAR

Thru Jan. 5, 1968—Kenn Johnson—oils and watercolors.

Jan. 5 - Feb. 29 — Ronald Ginther — "Depression on Puget Sound"—watercolors

Mar. 1-Mar. 31—Christian Larson carvings.

Apr. 1-May 31—Pacific Gallery Artists — "Historic Forts & Trading Posts"

SPECIAL

May 20-June 15—Currier & Ives originals (This overlaps the Pacific Gallery Artists show but will be exhibited on main floor of the museum.)

June 1-Aug. 2—Nancy McLaughlin — portraits of Blackfoot and Crow Indians

THE CHILDREN WRITE . . .

The museum receives an extensive mailing from school children who visit us on educational tours. We thought you would enjoy the three which follow. These are courtesy of Mrs. Olga Williams, our educational tour director, to whom the letters were addressed.

Jefferson School
Tacoma, Washington
December 8, 1967

Dear Mrs. Williams:

Thank you for a nice time at the museum. I liked the little longhouses and different houses with little people doing things. I liked the parka made of intestines of a whale and the one made of feathers of a bird. It was very much fun.

Sincerely,
Lori Kvamme

Dear Mrs. Williams:

We are glad you showed us around in the Museum. The things you showed were very interesting. I liked everything that you showed us, especially Dave and

Dandy. I liked the future telephones too. I liked the old-fashion living-room with Granny in the rocking chair.

Sincerely yours,
Flora Glenn

Dear Mrs. Williams:

Thank you for showing us around. I liked the trip to the museum. I liked the stuffed animals and the stuffed people, and the pictures.

Yours truly,
Randy Sacha

GIFTS AND ACCESSIONS

Mrs. Clara Johnson, Tacoma
Mrs. Grace Frederick, Tacoma
Mrs. Caroline Eubank, Montesano
Compliments of the Burton Historical Collection — Detroit Public Library

George M. Williams, Bellevue
Mrs. Mary Koch, Marysville
Mrs. J. J. Bowman, Puyallup
Hertzberg's Bindery, Tacoma
Bruce Le Roy, Tacoma
J. F. Hughes, Tucson, Arizona
Mrs. E. W. Richards, Tacoma
Mrs. Maurice Thompson, Tacoma
Captain James Young, APO, San Francisco

Miss Ruby Blackwell, Zenith,
Hugh O'Hara Thompson, Longview,
Wash.

Bill Mason, Tacoma
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Norman Thomas, Detroit
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Mr. Frank Findlay, Tacoma
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Reno Odlin, Tacoma
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Fine Arts Club of Tacoma, Tacoma
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and
MEMBERSHIP DUES
are
TAX DEDUCTIBLE

INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Date.....

Attention: The Director

Sir:



Please receive my application for membership in the Washington State Historical Society. I am interested in the history of Washington State and desire to help support the important work of the Society through my membership.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Enclosed is a check for the payment of dues in the amount of \$.....

Classes of Membership —

- 1) Annual: \$4.00
- 2) Sustaining: \$25 a year
- 3) Life: \$100
- 4) Corporate: \$100 a year

Your membership entitles you to the Pacific Northwest Quarterly, NEWS NOTES and discounts on books and Society publications.

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