

NATIONAL AWARD OF MERIT FOR WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tacoma Sunday Ledger, Oct. 23, 1949.
—The Washington State Historical Society has been signally honored by being selected for the 1949 "Award of Merit" granted by the American Association for State and Local History.

Word of the award was received Saturday by the society, in a letter from Albert B. Corey of the University of the State of New York, chairman of the committee on awards.

The award will take the form of an engraved certificate which will be sent shortly. But one such award is made each year and the honor is much sought after among historical organizations.

With Mr. Corey's letter of congratulation was received a copy of the wording to appear on the certificate, which reads as follows: "For its sponsorship of the regional conference on Northwest history in 1948 and 1949, which has paved the way for regional co-operation in all fields of local historical endeavor, and for its program for the revitalization of its museum and particularly for a series of photographic murals of outstanding significance as documentary displays of the character of the past."

The history conferences referred to brought together history leaders in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and British Columbia. The conference took steps at the 1949 session in Tacoma which seemed a reasonable goal in five years, the adoption of a uniform syllabus for the teaching of Northwest history. This means that Northwest history would forget state boundary lines although at the same time would strengthen the teaching of history in individual states through knowledge of how events in the entire Northwest touch history in each state.

The photographic murals referred to are the S. A. Perkins murals in Washington hall. This photographic story of early Washington history has made Washington hall unique of its kind in the entire country. That has been the goal of the society and Mr. Perkins in making the murals possible and this opinion apparently has been shared by the national organization.

"Early in the summer we were asked to submit a report of the work of the Washington State Historical Society," said Chapin D. Foster, its director. "It was something of an honor to be asked to submit our report for the society feels it has been carrying forward a very important work with some success, but to be singled out for the 1949 award of merit is an honor which we appreciate very deeply for this recognition is one coveted by every organization in the field of history.

"Our report covered the history conference, mural development in Washington hall, organization of county historical societies in a number of counties

during the past year, memorial alcoves and projects in the building, particularly the habitat displays in Bowles hall, and general development of the museum. The special projects which have played an important part in bringing the national award to the Washington society, are only a part of the program of special projects which we hope friends of the society will make a reality in the near future."

The award was voted on at the annual meeting of the association in Burlington, Vt., and the letter from Corey, who is state historian of New York and chairman of the committee on awards, was the first intimation received here of the action taken.

S. A. Perkins, president of the society, is highly gratified by selection of the Washington society for the highest American Association of State and Local

History award for the current year. Other officers of the society include: Howard A. Hanson, Seattle, and Dr. E. O. Holland, Pullman, vice presidents; Guy T. Pierce, Tacoma, treasurer, board of curators: Mrs. G. E. Anderson, Aberdeen; Harold Barto, Ellensburg; A. S. Beardsley, Seattle; Howard Burnham, Vancouver; A. S. Cory, Chehalis; the Rev. W. L. Davis, Spokane; H. J. Deutsch, Pullman; Joel E. Ferris, Spokane; C. M. Gates, Seattle; Mrs. Thomas P. Gose, Walla Walla; Joshua Green, Seattle; W. L. McCormick, Tacoma; Donald A. McDonald, Seattle; Mrs. Roger Peck, Tacoma; Archie Shiels, Bellingham; Thomas A. Swayze, Tacoma; Dr. R. Franklin Thompson, Tacoma; Stanton Warburton, Jr., Tacoma; D. H. White, Tacoma; Mrs. Pearl Wanamaker, Olympia; Harold S. Woodworth, Tacoma; O. H. Woody, Okanogan, and Leon K. Jones, Seattle.

Historical Society Honored

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Because of the fact that its headquarters have long been in Tacoma many of us have thought of the Washington State Historical Society and its building as a Tacoma institution. And as so often happens we have been guilty of inattention just because it was considered a local organization. Of course, it isn't, since the officers and members of the board of curators come from every section of the state.

In the last few years operation of the Historical Society building has been revitalized and its importance forced upon our somewhat unwilling minds. But even so the value of the work of the society seems to be realized more from afar than locally. This is borne out by the awarding to the Washington State Historical Society of the 1949 "Award of Merit" by the American Association for State and Local History.

This flattering token of appreciation comes as a result of the sponsorship by the society of the Regional Conference on Northwest History in 1948 and 1949. This brought together in Tacoma historians from the Pacific Northwest states and British Columbia which set as a five-year goal adoption of a uniform syllabus for the teaching of Northwest history.

The certificate recognizes revitalization of the museum which has been accomplished by the officers, board and its director, Chapin D. Foster, and the series of photographic murals depicting early Washington history, a gift of its president, S. A. Perkins. These fit in with the habitat displays, memorial alcoves and general development of the museum.

A visit to an art gallery or a museum is something which cannot be done in a hurry. In this Tacoma we are lucky for with the State Historical Society building handy to all of us we can absorb the historical displays housed there at our convenience. And attendance reports indicate that growing numbers of us are becoming more and more aware of our good fortune.