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Jefferson County Historical Society

SITES
Jefferson Museum of Art & History
Historic City Hall
540 Water Street
Port Townsend, WA
Research Center
13692 Airport Cutoff Road
Port Townsend, WA
Rothschild House Museum
Franklin & Taylor Streets
Port Townsend, WA
Commanding Officer’s Quarters
Officers’ Row, Fort Worden
Port Townsend, WA
Olympic Peninsula Gateway Visitor Center
Junction of Highway 104 & Highway 19
Port Ludlow, WA
Saving Stories

Saving stories. Simply put, that is the mission of the Jefferson County Historical Society. As our Collections Manager Becky Schurmann so aptly said, “Stories come embedded in the artifacts we collect.” Stories are found in our archival documents, in our artifacts, in our oral histories. Some stories are obvious—the wedding dress, the birth certificate, the child’s toy, the high school class photo, the doctor’s bag, the tombstone, all tell the story of a life. Some stories are not so obvious; how did the Native American hand axe get to be in the North Beach garden 4,000 years after it was created by one of our earliest residents? But, its survival over the centuries does tell us something about its maker. There are over half a million stories in the JCHS collection. We thank all of the members, trustees, volunteers, staff, and supporters who help keep those stories alive.

William Tennent, Executive Director
January
The Board of Trustees' held their Annual Retreat. Chris Prescott was re-elected president with Dorothy Cotton Banks as vice president. Teachers continued to make good use of the traveling Museum Trunks in their classrooms. First Saturday Art Walks and first Saturday Free Day at the Museum began and continued throughout the year.

February
The First Friday Lecture featured Joanne Pickering and “Living on Tatoosh Island.” JCHS co-sponsored a program about Grange halls at the Quimper Grange.

March
A major new exhibit Tom Wilson: The Best Known Unknown Artist in the Northwest opened at the Jefferson Museum. The Port Townsend Victorian Festival featured the JCHS Scholarship Fashion Show and walking tours of Downtown and Uptown Port Townsend as well as open houses at three museums. JCHS staff participated in the annual Arts & Heritage Caucus in Olympia. The First Friday Lecture featured David Hansen, author of Battle Ready.

April
The historical society’s 136th birthday was celebrated at a Founders’ Day Open House at the Research Center. Shore excursions for American Cruise Lines began and continued throughout the spring. JCHS held a Volunteer Fair. The First Friday Lecture featured JoAnne Roe author of Ghost Camps and Boom Towns.

May
The Rothschild House and the Commanding Officer’s Quarters opened for the season. Tree Swenson presented “The Early History of Copper Canyon Press” as the First Friday Lecture. JCHS participated in the Rhody Festival Parade. Centennial Farm certificates were presented in Chimacum. The annual Historic Preservation Awards were presented.

June
The First Friday Lecture Featured “Logging on the Olympic Peninsula” with Jack Zaccardo. Historic Walking Tours of Uptown and Downtown Port Townsend began for the summer season. JCHS Partnered with the “Steampunk Hootenanny.” The annual conference of the Washington Museum Association was held at Maryhill Museum with JCHS staff participation.
July
Weekend walking tours of Uptown and Downtown continued.

August
Fall cruise ship shore excursions began and continued through October. Two Summer History Camps took place at the Commanding Officer’s Quarters.

September
Bob Bartlett of Eastern Washington University presented the First Friday Lecture “Black Paratroopers in the Northwest During WWII.”

October
The First Friday Lecture featured the founding of OPEPO, Port Townsend’s alternative school. Benefit Epicurean Happenings began and continued through the fall. Tom Jay presented an Art Talk on sculpture to complement the major new exhibit Tom Jay: Artist & Artisan mounted at the Jefferson Museum featuring sculptures cast by clients of the River Dog Foundry.

November
The annual Volunteer Appreciation Party took place. Cheryl Merrill, author of Living in the Shadow of Elephants presented the First Friday Lecture. The annual West End Weekend took place at Kalaloch Lodge featuring a lecture by Jack Zaccardo and storytelling with Gary Peterson at the Peak 6 Adventure Store. The Commanding Officer’s Quarters was open Thanksgiving weekend.

December
The year ended with First Night, a New Year’s Eve celebration of heritage and art featuring dance, music, storytelling, theater, hands-on history and art projects, and children’s games in and around historic City Hall culminating with fireworks and the new tradition of “raising the anchor.”
Collections & Exhibits

Collections:
- Accessioned, catalogued in Past Perfect, and located in new storage 324 gifts to the collection. Assisted by Jodi DelGrosso, Collections Assistant and Virginia Jennings, Volunteer Registrar.
- Unpacked, photographed, put into permanent storage and relocated in Past Perfect 470 artifacts with the help of volunteers Dorothy Cotton, Margaret Mazurkiewicz, David Burton and Christine McCall.
- Completed inventory and photographs of the Organics Collection, composed of 350 objects, in preparation for the new native exhibit in the spring.
- Re-numbered and photographed the 90 art objects in the Simpson Collection. Re-housed and noted new locations in Past Perfect.
- Gave several formal and many informal tours of the Collection Building.
- Attended the 2015 WaMA annual conference in Maryhill, Oregon.
- Facilitated and observed the up righting of our Post Office safe and move to a permanent storage place.

Exhibits:
- Facilitated the installation of a new, vastly improved track lighting system in the Courtroom Gallery.
- Assisted Curator Ann Welch with the Tom Wilson exhibit by repairing and rewiring many of Tom’s painting.
- Mounted a new exhibit at the Rothschild House for the summer season.
- Began working on the Tom Jay sculpture exhibit in April.
- Installed a souvenir plate exhibit in the lobby to enhance our commitment to saving the Lincoln school.
- Contacted and made pick-up arrangements with 30 sculptors for 34 pieces of art for the Tom Jay exhibit.
- Made five new sculpture stands and borrowed 10 more. Repaired as needed and painted all.
- Working with co-curator, Stephen Yates and conservator, Laura Reutter, curated and installed the Tom Jay exhibit.
- Began the preliminary work of selecting artifacts to be used in our partnership exhibit with Northwind Arts Center.
- Began making contact with contemporary Native artists in Jefferson County for inclusion in our Northwest Native Art exhibit to open in March 2016.

Becky Schurmann
Collection Manager/Exhibit Designer
The historical society partnership with the Jefferson County Genealogical Society continues to be beneficial to both organizations. The genealogical society has done an excellent job of recruiting new volunteers to staff the Research Center, making it possible to remain open to the public five days a week. They have created and maintain several indexes of vital records that are available to view online. Many historical society documents have been included. Especially useful is the index of articles and vital records from local newspapers.

With the wealth of documentation at hand at the Research Center I was able to nominate the Lincoln School for both the Washington Trust’s 10 Most Endangered Properties List and the National Register of Historic Places.

We eventually overcame the complications of upgrading to a new server and networking sixteen computer workstations of various ages and abilities in three different locations and two organizations. We then upgraded to the latest version of PastPerfect (our museum software program) and changed to a better email provider.

Major donations:
- Sixty-two ledgers, registers, cash books, and minute books dating from 1869 to 2012 from the Port Townsend Masonic Lodge #6.
- Minutes and bylaws, 1993 - 2010, for the Jefferson County Democratic Central Committee and Jefferson County Democrats. Materials were donated after a very successful search for history on the local democrats.
- Minute books, correspondence, and papers related to the Order of Native Daughters of Washington, Port Townsend’s Lucinda Hastings ‘Parlor’ #1, dating from 1895.
- Tokens, photographs, brochures, advertisements, and newspaper articles related to the history of transit services in Jefferson County.
- Photo album of Webster family photographs.
- Scrapbooks held by Dorothy D. Hunt for the Children’s Orthopedic Guild, Toastmistress and Garden Clubs of Port Townsend.
- Newsletters from Womanplace, Volumes 1-7.
- A large collection of original drawings and prints by Ross McCall. Most were drawn of customers at Tami’s Tavern, 926 Water Street, 1970s and 1980s.
- Documents and photographs re: Judge John M. Ralston and Graham W. Ralston.

Jerry Gorsline granted the copyright to Shadows of Our Ancestors: Readings in the History of Klallam-White Relations to JCHS. It is an excellent scholarly account and a very interesting read about local tribal history. It has been re-published through Amazon’s CreateSpace platform.

Thirty-six volunteers reported working 4,931 hours in support of Research Center operations in 2015. There were 6,815 searches conducted on the jchswa online search site. The online search site now offers an index of 75,217 records with 26,681 images of artifacts and historic photographs.

Marsha Moratti, Archivist
Commanding Officer’s Quarters Museum

The Commanding Officer’s Quarters hosted two sessions of the popular “Join the Regiment” summer history camp for boys and girls 8 through 12 years old. The camp featured a “soft” version of Army life at the turn of the 20th century. Activities included a bivouac to the beach, obstacle course, field games, beach scavenger hunt, hut making, and kite making and flying.

We said farewell to long-time historic house manager Steve Bailey at the end of the year when he retired to Whidbey Island. Steve had been an enthusiastic advocate for the Commanding Officer’s Quarters and also for the Rothschild House Museum. House docent Bonnie Fritz stepped in to handle volunteer assignments through the end of 2015.

Rothschild House Museum

We had another great year at the Rothschild House thanks to volunteer docents Bonnie Fritz, Kay Young, Shelly Reiss, Judith Wolfe, Monica Fletcher, Suzanne Hempstead, Nancy Pempey, Irene Evans and Craig Britton.

We also had the services of custodian and groundskeeper Mark Vonderfetch through the auspices of the Olympic Area Agency on Aging program. The house was open as usual May through September as well as during the Victorian Festival in March and for the occasional school or group tour during the off season.

A hat (and hatpin) exhibit was this season’s changing exhibit. All hats were drawn from the extensive JCHS clothing collection and were on display throughout the house.
Here at the Olympic Peninsula Gateway Visitor Center we are ambassadors for Jefferson County tourism and the Jefferson County Historical Society. We support and showcase all tourism-related business in Jefferson County. Dedicated volunteers serve our county by providing up-to-date information on all aspects of our area to visitors. We also present our county heritage with exhibits in the museum section and showcase the cultural side of our county with six different art exhibits during the year to promote this eclectic aspect of our area.

The Gateway Visitor Center provided current tourism information and Jefferson County history to 8,609 visitors on site in 2015. We were at work 362 days directing the traveler to the diverse activities and communities that make our Olympic Peninsula region the gem of the Pacific Northwest. Our Volunteers donated over 1,100 hours in 2015, promoting all businesses and Jefferson County here at the Visitor Center.

In our work outside the Visitor Center we also manage a request-based mailing program promoting Jefferson County. We distribute Jefferson County information on Washington State Ferries, and to other Visitor Centers in the region. These programs made contact with another 37,761 prospective visitors in 2015. Our Visitor Center provides ongoing website review and support for the Olympic Peninsula Tourism website, www.enjoyolympicpeninsula.com and www.olympicpeninsula.org sites for Jefferson County and a FaceBook page.

The Gateway Visitor Center staff provides oversight and funding to support the “Jefferson County Activity Map: This brochure-style map is our Jefferson County promotional mailing piece. The Information side of the map includes lodging, restaurants, museums, parks, campgrounds, farms, wineries, marinas, and golf courses. The map side has icons for activities ranging from fishing and hiking trails to bird watching. The Gateway Visitor Center was also involved as lead in Jefferson County lodging list production that is used to produce publications like the Olympic Peninsula Travel Planner, and the Port Townsend and Jefferson County Getaway Guide. Our Visitor Center staff also contributes oversight and development as chairperson for the Jefferson County Tourism Coordinating Council and as a voting member for the Olympic Peninsula Tourism Commission.

William Roney, Visitor Center Manager
Museum Shop

2015 was an experimental year for the Museum Shop. Kris Lawson took 2015 to re-examine the value of the shop to the museum and museum revenue. Sales remained the same for 2015 as for the previous couple of years.

The shop began taking local artists’ work on commission, including the work of Laura Reutter, Nancy McDaniel, and Margaret Takaki. By sourcing our products locally, and displaying a breadth of community crafts and creations, we are working to reflect the historical society’s mission in our merchandise, to promote the culture, history and heritage of Jefferson County.

The Museum Shop also continues to sell the publications of the lecturers and presenters of the First Friday Lectures series. Stop by the shop to pick up titles from the lectures you missed.

Walking Tours

From June through September, historically-costumed guides escort visitors on entertaining tours of Port Townsend’s once-rowdy Downtown and ever-genteel Uptown. Guides point out the interesting architecture, unique history and colorful characters who built Port Townsend. Uptown tours feature the residential district, with its fine homes and churches (and probable deer sightings). The Downtown tours feature fine Victorian buildings and reveal the waterfront commercial district’s disreputable past.

The pace allows time for talented guides to tell stories about the people who built Port Townsend’s National Historic District. These little expeditions last about an hour and provide a wealth of entertaining information to both visitors and long-time residents. Walking tour guides also act as ambassadors for Port Townsend, providing onboard greetings and walking tours for American Cruise Line passengers who come to town on more than twenty ships in the spring and fall.

The Downtown tours begin at 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays at the Jefferson Museum of Art & History (museum admission included). The Uptown tours start at 2:00 p.m. on Sundays at the Rothschild House Museum (museum admission also included).
The First Friday Lecture Series programs were outstanding and diverse with nearly every program having full attendance. The Education members assist with suggestions of possible speakers along with being greeters at each program and taking donations at the door.

The Victorian Fashion Show was presented at the Presbyterian Church to benefit the JCHS Scholarship program by donations only. JoAnn Bussa produces, directs and coordinates this event and has made it the highlight of the Victorian Festival. This year, two $500 scholarships were presented to Port Townsend High School graduates Cooper Lee and Lucas DeLong.

The Port Townsend Chamber of Commerce used the Sailor and Navigation Sea Chest at a Travel Fair for military families held at the Tacoma Convention Center.

Meetings to plan a possible “Night at the Museum” event for children were held with Bill Tennent and former committee members to discuss details for this event. A possible date for the event will be in 2016.

At the beginning of each school year, flyers announcing the availability and a description of the five Traveling Museum Trunks are distributed to each teacher in the school district.

A craft for children was designed and planned for the First Night event which was held at the Jefferson Community School. Approximately 100 people took part in making the craft.

Meetings with the Port Townsend High School art teacher and a tour of the Research Center were held with the hope that we can involve her students with the JCHS art collection. Other high school and middle school teachers are interested in bringing their students to the museum if travel details can be arranged.

The traveling museum trunks have had a wide variety of use this year with not only students in the classroom but being a learning tool for the Quilcene 4-H Club and the Travel Fair. 466 students and adults used the trunks in their studies in 2015.

Submitted by:
Robin Ornelas, Chair
Committee Members:
JoAnn Bussa
Beth Mackey
Linda Spurgeon
Gabe Ornelas
In 2015 the Jefferson County Historical Society presented a total of eight historic preservation awards: one Mary P. Johnson Award and seven Certificates of Appreciation. The awards have been presented annually since 1978 and are selected each year from county-wide nominations. They include awards for restoration of historic structures as well as programs, projects and individuals that help preserve the history of Jefferson County. Awards were presented on May 6 at the Quimper Grange Hall, 1219 Corona Street, Port Townsend.

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to:

- Scott and Linda Spurgeon for ongoing stewardship of the James B. Hogg House, 932 Pierce Street, Port Townsend
- Port Townsend Masonic Lodge No. 6 for ongoing stewardship of the Port Townsend Masonic Center, 1333 Jefferson Street, Port Townsend
- Soundview Cemetery for ongoing stewardship of an important Marrowstone Island heritage site
- Jeff Monroe for moving the Enchanted Valley Chalet away from the Quinault river and saving it from imminent destruction
- Darrell Conder for researching and writing Meet me at the Bus Stop, 125 years of Public Transportation in Jefferson County, 1889-1925
- Jacilee Wray for researching and writing River Near the Sea: An Ethnohistory of the Queets River Valley
- Quimper Grange #720 for ongoing stewardship of the Quimper Grange Hall, Port Townsend

The 2015 Mary P. Johnson Award was presented to Craig Britton and Carleen Bruins for restoration work on the Landes House in Port Townsend. The Landes House, 1934 Franklin Street, incorporates the 1871 Dennison House and later 1881-1883 construction by Colonel Henry Landes into one structure.
February
Joanne Pickering spoke about her “Life on Tatoosh Island.” Pickering described living in isolation on a tiny island facing horrific storms, dangerous waters and rugged terrain. Venturing off or onto the island you get into a basket on the bow of a boat and are hoisted up a 90 foot cliff by a huge boom.

March

April
JoAnn Roe presented her book Ghost Camps & Boom Towns. Roe told stories about pioneer towns settled for mining, lumbering, and maritime surveillance along the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

May
Tree Swenson presented “The Early History of Copper Canyon Press.”

June
Jack Zaccardo presented the “History of Olympic Peninsula Logging.”

September

October
History of OPEPO

November
Cheryl Merrill, Living in the shadows of Elephants
New and Renewing Members

Mt. Zion - $250
David Burton & Christine McCaill

Mt. Walker - $100
Christine Jones Crubaugh
Bonnie Kendall-Gilmore
Linda Yakush
Jack Zaccardo
James Arrabito
Thomas Mansfield
Brian Hancock
Don Dybeck

Mt. Elk Lick—$50
Mary Rothschild
Anne-Marie Heckt
L Katherine Baril
Raul Huerta
Walter Galitzki
John Gasparini
Mary Elayne Dunphy
Celeste Bennett
Don Giedt
Ellen Hargis
Michael Buse
Larry Layman
Lawrence Lang
David Strong
Marge Abraham
Steve Andes
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Paula Becker
Betsy Pendergast
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& George Hastings
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John Maki
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Sally Robbins
Jacquelyn Summers
Michael Buse & Celia Walden
Elizabeth Peterson
Dorette was born in Seattle, Washington to Eugene Rothschild and Bess Snyder. She spent many happy summers in Port Townsend visiting her grandmother Dorette and aunt Emile Rothschild.
In 1959, she was instrumental in establishing her grandparent’s 1868 home as an historic site. With her staunch support, the Jefferson County Historical Society has managed the historic house museum for Washington State Parks.