

*The Clallam County
Historical Society is a
private, non-profit
corporation.*

With the exception of the few grants we have been awarded in the past, we do not receive funding from the city, county, state or federal government. It is this community's belief in us that supports our efforts to preserve and share the county's history. The board of directors and volunteer staff thank you for your continued support.

*CCHS thanks Virginia Fitzpatrick
for her sponsorship of this
publication.*



Check out our website at
www.clallamhistoricalsociety.com

When Downtown Looked Up

by John Kendall and Don Perry

By 1914, downtown Port Angeles was slowly committing sewer-side.

The shoreline was at Front Street, and the north side began a hodgepodge of piers and docks that stretched north for two blocks with buildings on pilings and a railroad track on a pier.

When nature called, people left responses in the water, and there were outhouses on the ends of docks. Tidal flushing from the Strait of Juan de Fuca was blocked by Ediz Hook, resulting in an incomplete flush. During winter freezes, trapped feces along the shore left an unpleasant odor.

A preteen, Emily Campbell remembered this when a boy offered to show Emily and her sister downtown during the early 1900s: "The tide went out and that was a treat. On the beach in front of the town Roy showed us how to dig clams and find pretty rocks. . . . Roy took us girls under the Guttenberg Furniture Store. It was all open under there. He told us we might find things that dropped from the store above. What he didn't tell was that the sanitary disposal system of the waterfront stores was the tide. It did the flushing as it came in and out. The toilets emptied right onto the

beach. Well, we found things that dropped from the building all right – and some of them squished over the tops of shoes."

The downtown flooded five to 50 times a year, often with no warning.

Port Angeles had a deep-water protected port, busy mills and canneries east and west of downtown as well a growing population in the area, but it didn't have a downtown that could grow.

Three factors came together to change that.

1) Thomas Aldwell, a Canadian-born entrepreneur, built a dam on the Elwha River to supply power to local mills and owned a building downtown. Gregers Marius Lauridsen, a Danish-born businessman, owned a store downtown. Both bought a majority of the bonds after the City Council approved the bond issue to upgrade downtown.

2) By coincidence, the engineers who built the dam were available for the project. Ironically, to Aldwell they were damn engineers because of their sloppy work -- concrete dumped into wooden forms between canyon walls never reached the very bottom of the river. As a result, when the river flow was redirected behind the

new dam, pressure blew out the bottom of the dam. So millions were spent to patch it, and it was officially reopened on Nov. 5, 1913. Possibly Aldwell realized that the engineers were here and to bring another group to Port Angeles would be more expensive.

(Continued on page 3)



*Sluicing the hill took a lot of hard work using a hand shovel.
Photo ca. 1914.*



**CLALLAM COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Upcoming History Tales:

Dennis Duncan

The Power of Storytelling

April 7

West End Memories

May 5

***Annual meeting with
speaker Peggy Norris***

***Port Angeles: The All
American City***

June 2

CONTACT

Mailing Address:

Clallam County Historical Society
P.O. Box 1327
Port Angeles, WA 98362

Physical Address:

933 West 9th Street
Port Angeles, WA 98363

Museum at the Carnegie:

207 South Lincoln Street
Port Angeles, WA 98362

email: artifact@olypen.com

website: clallamhistoricalsociety.com

Telephones:

Administration: 360-452-2662

Museum at the Carnegie: 360-452-6779

STRAIT HISTORY Volume VIII, Number 2.

Strait History is a periodical publication of
Clallam County Historical Society.

Copyright ©2013, Clallam County Historical
Society. All rights reserved.

View from the Executive Director's Desk

By Kathy Monds

As 2013 came around, we started thinking about goals for this new year. *Strait History* has been in need of an editor so it can be published quarterly. I am pleased to announce that John Kendall has stepped forward to take on that responsibility. We will be back on track with issues coming out in March, June, September and December. Thank you, John, for saying "yes."

Public programming has always been important to CCHS. While there were a few challenges with History Tales, this important program is now under the capable leadership of Jim and Kathy Rankin. Due to changes in City policy, the History Tales venue will be moving to the First United Methodist & Congregational Church at 110 East 7th Street in Port Angeles.

A preservation workshop will be offered this spring, and we will open the Research Library on a special day and time to highlight the resources that are available.

Karen Sistek has generously donated one of her silk paintings for our annual raffle. You will learn more about that in a special mailing.

Last—but never least—we have set the dates for the garage sale. You may start bringing us your treasures in March on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Special arrangements may be made by calling the office at 360-452-2662.

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas you would like to share, please call, stop by, or send me an e-mail. You, the members of the Clallam County Historical Society, are extremely important to us. Your support is greatly appreciated.

CCHS Research Library

By Dona Cloud, Research Librarian

A library is a treasure trove of facts and fiction available to all, mysteries unraveled and mysteries found.

In the coming months, the Research Library of the Clallam County Historical Society is expanding. The building will have a general face lift inside and out to further serve the community in its search for and about people, places and things. Continued cross referencing will enable researchers and volunteers to trace county history in many ways.

Books, clippings, photographs, people files, maps, videos and oral histories are ready resources. A subject card catalogue and computer indexes are guides to materials in the Research Library.

The Library is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesdays and at other times by appointment. A volunteer staff is on hand to help researchers find their sources of interest and glean the stories that they tell. Requests for information are accepted and researched. There can be a charge for extensive research by staff. Photocopies are available for one dollar a page; some sensitive materials are restricted from photo copying. There is a fee for reproduction of photos.

(Continued from page 1)

3) Similar to the Denny regrade project in downtown Seattle years earlier, the engineers needed soil to replace water along the shore. Just east of downtown, where Front and Peabody streets are now, was a hill called “the hogback.” Between First and Front streets engineers used pumps to force harbor water through high-pressure hoses to break down the soil of the hogback. The resulting sluice traveled through wooden pipes three feet in diameter along Front and First streets to downtown’s Front, First, Lincoln, Oak and Laurel streets, which now had thick sides to hold the sluice. At the same time Peabody Creek, which ran from near Second and Lincoln streets, then headed north to Front Street then west to Valley Creek, was rerouted via a large culvert directly to the harbor.

The project accomplished six goals:

- 1) Engineers did not want to put sewer pipes under the harbor – the raised streets solved that problem. The harbor would no longer be an open sewer; wooden pipes would take effluent out into the harbor.
- 2) Water pipes were also installed.
- 3) Permanent streets – Front, First, Laurel and Oak -- created a lasting downtown.
- 4) During the project, businesses continued to operate, although the owners of each building over time had several options: Raze the building, raise the building to the new street level; put it on a raised platform.
- 5) The concrete form on the north side of Front Street served as a sea wall to prevent flooding.
- 6) Downtown now had Front and First streets extend east – where the hogback was, and, with Peabody Creek filled in, Lincoln Street could extend south and soon become a north-south artery.

The project began January 1914 and raised street levels to heights of 10, 15 and 16 feet. It took six months. The biggest challenge was Front Street -- because of its westward incline, how would the sluice harden over time without having the heavier sluice wind



Water cascades over dams built to manage heavy mud flows during the sluicing project. (photo circa 1914)

up at the lower, western end? A series of dams slowed the flow so the sluice hardened consistently.

As the heavy mud worked its way to the bottom between the forms, the lighter, slightly muddy water cascaded over the forms into drainage ditches and out to the harbor. During this process, stores remained open, although the ground floors looked out onto concrete walls that sometimes provided a waterfall.

By June 1914, planks were secured between the walls, then extended over the original sidewalks and anchored to building walls. So single-story shops went “underground,” while multi-story buildings had their second stories now directly accessible from the sidewalks. With a wooden roadbed, it often became slippery for vehicles, pedestrians and cows. It was legal for cows to roam downtown until the City Council banned them.

It took six years for the mud to harden enough for the planks to be pulled up and concrete roadbeds put down. Wooden beams reinforced the sidewalks, then concrete was poured over the wood.

During the 1990s, the city filled in the sidewalks along First and Front streets and the

east side of Laurel Street. One sidewalk and the space under it – along the west side of Laurel Street – has been restored, using cedar planking, concrete and skylights. A historical walking tour includes a store that once was at ground level, but now remains a below-sidewalk reminder of how a city literally upgraded its downtown.

Researcher John Kendall writes articles for the monthly Seniors Sunset Times. He has written articles on local history for the Peninsula Daily News and is working on several history projects.

For 12 years, Don Perry has been conducting twice-a-day historic walking tours which start at the Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce office every day but Sunday, year round. If you have any clarifications or additions to this article, leave a message for Perry at the Chamber.

Resources related to this article:

In 1996 the Nor' Wester Rotary Club of Port Angeles sponsored a mural which is on the building facing the northeast corner of First and Laurel streets. It shows a romanticized version of the project. “Port Angeles Washington: A History” by Paul Martin has 11 pages of photos of the project. “The Evolution of Emily” by Emily Lewis Miles describes her life in Clallam County, including a childhood tour under stores. Both books are out of print.



MISSION STATEMENT:

The Clallam County
Historical Society
is devoted to the
preservation and
interpretation of our
County's cultural
heritage as a vital
service to the
community and its
visitors.

Research Library
931 West 9th Street
Port Angeles, Washington
98363
360-452-2662
Open Tuesdays, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
or by appointment

From the Museum at the Carnegie

By Lee and Gwen Porterfield

Wild, witty, wise and wicked. These are the types of books donated by the patrons of the Clallam County Historical Society. The books reflect our marvelous membership and have been lovingly read and cared for and now given to us to use in The Museum's shop—Books Plus. The dates range from the 1800s to 2012. Some are new with local authors. Some worn but treasured—ready to entertain just the right person. Many of these books are collectors' items such as the Folio Society Books. These books are specially selected classics with enhanced artwork, a clear readable text and boxed to protect their beauty. The books are processed and sold by volunteers so all funds are slated for the use of the Clallam County Historical Society. Also available on the Plus side are items by local artisans as well as postcards, cds, dvds, and historical magazines.

Save the past for the future. Join with your fellow members in this fund raising project to assist CCHS in preserving the history of Clallam County.



Historical Resources Centers: West End

By John Kendall

"All the people who lived in the West End (of Clallam and Jefferson counties) were very self-sufficient. Family events became community projects. You didn't go out and buy – we depended on ourselves. They were tough times."

That was Adria Fuhrman's description of pioneer life. It is in the memory of pioneers past and present that the West End Historical Society is dedicated.

The group meets monthly to hear memories of pioneers (a recent meeting had an 85 and 90 year old as guests), while the main purpose is to "get together, have lunch, share our memories and be entertained." The meeting usually ends with an open microphone.

Fuhrman, 74, takes a microphone, part of a cassette tape recorder, to preserve memories of West End pioneers. So far she has done about 10. "Our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren – we have to preserve the past for them," she said. There are about 30 scrapbooks full of old clippings at the Forks Library which the group hopes to break down and file.

Her mother, Magda Meredith, graduated from Forks High School with its first class in 1927. Her keepsakes from that period are part of Heritage Windows display for the 1920s at the high school. Other windows represent succeeding decades to the present.

Fuhrman is the group's vice president and program chairman. Her husband's family settled the Hoh River area in the 1880s.

The West End Historical Society has about 25 members, who pay \$5 to join. The West End Old Timers club was organized Feb. 28, 1959. In 1966 it began choosing pioneers for the Forks Fourth of July parades, which the present club continues.

It meets at J. T.'s Sweet Stuff at noon the second Tuesday of the month.

A Great Volunteer: Phyllis Wheeler

By John Kendall

Those newspapers you threw out, those magazine clippings you meant to save but got rid of – they're all gone.

But for 19 years, Phyllis Wheeler has been part of the Historical Society's efforts to save printed history. Thanks to her, it's not gone. And while the information is not in digital form – Wheeler doesn't even own a computer – the information rests in paper folders or boxes, where researchers – past, present and future – can have supervised access to what amounts to the county's collective memory.

Over the years the Society uses an informal arrangement whereby newspapers (the *Peninsula Daily News*, *Sequim Gazette*, *Forks Forum*) and other examples of printed material deemed appropriate to save by Society personnel are placed on Phyllis's desk in the Research Center. Wheeler also brings her own material.

Every Tuesday and Thursday she comes in and looks over the trove, which may be as many as 25 items. Many articles to be filed are photocopied because "newspapers don't keep in files well" and newsprint packed in files can deteriorate paper next to it. Then they are put in a subject heading. For example, there are 29 boxes for Port Angeles schools. Roosevelt School could be in three different files – high school, junior high, middle school or, its present role, grade school. If it's in more than one subject heading, Conny Duppenthaler, a volunteer who handles the index card catalog, makes a card for each subsequent heading, so the goal is to have no duplicate documents in the files, although sometimes an original document will have a photocopy. Within files, related items are put in transparent sleeves. Sometimes an article, filed long ago, will not have a date or source on it. "It's irritating," she said. "There's nothing you can do about it."

The Society is the only organization in Clallam County that does filing of paper items

of historic value on a consistent basis. The Port Angeles Library sometimes clipped articles from the mid-50s up to about the late 1980s, and some still rest in vertical files there. The Peninsula Daily News has electronic archives back to March 1997, which are accessible on its website. The library system has newspapers on microfilm and the Society has originals of some, but articles in those newspapers are obviously not categorized.

Wheeler's life, it seems, could be filed under "E" for efficiency.

Born in Stayton, Oregon, she grew up in Camas, Washington, "a Crown Z town." After high school she moved to Southern California, where she worked at the McDonnell Douglas airplane assembly plant during World War II. Wheeler had polio as a child, so the schedule of 10-hour days, six days a week proved too much. Next, as a civilian, she was head postal clerk at the San Pedro Naval Station. If any household items were lost, "I had to find them, and it could be anywhere in the U.S."

She married a Coast Guardsman. They came to Port Angeles in 1948, then Hawaii, then back to Port Angeles in 1952. She took bookkeeping classes at Peninsula College, then worked for Syd Tozier, who ran an insurance company, where every business day the balance had to be "on the penny."

Years later, she retired and volunteered at the YMCA, where she did scrap crafts with Dona Cloud, who convinced her in 1994 to volunteer at the Society, which was then in the basement of the courthouse.

Of all the Society's volunteers, she said, "I think they're great, and a great group to work with."

One of her two daughters is Sherrill Fouts, manager of the Forks Timber Museum. She enjoys spending time with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She



Garage Sale Dates:

August 29

Members Only Preview

August 30 & 31

Regular Sale Days

September 6

Half-price Day

September 7

Buck-a-Bag Day



doesn't have a computer ("I can't afford it"), but "I can always ask my grandkids or great-grandkids how to use a computer if I have a question."

At age 89, the big question is how long before she files it under "done." "Many friends my age don't stay active. If I become physically or mentally incapacitated, then I will retire. You never know. My God, I'm 89."

Until that day arrives, a stack of clippings sits on her desk, awaiting placement in the correct files.

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Olympic Mailing
Service



CLALLAM COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1327 • Port Angeles, WA 98362
Address Service Requested

DO YOU REMEMBER?

This photo shows the foremen of Olympic Ship Builders and was taken on July 26, 1943. Do you recognize any of the men or have stories or memories about this company?



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

When Downtown Looked Up... Page 1
From the Director... Page 2
CCHS Research Library... Page 2
Historical Resources... Page 4
Volunteer Phyllis Wheeler... Page 5

artifac@olympen.com

John Kendall is working on a detailed story of President Roosevelt's visit to Port Angeles in September 1937. Anyone with personal knowledge of that visit is asked to contact Kathy Monds, 360-452-2662,

CLALLAM COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

