



# Strait History

VOLUME XIX NUMBER 4 FALL QUARTER OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2025

## MISSION STATEMENT

We connect the future, through the present, with the past.

*All programs are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.*

### 2026 Programs

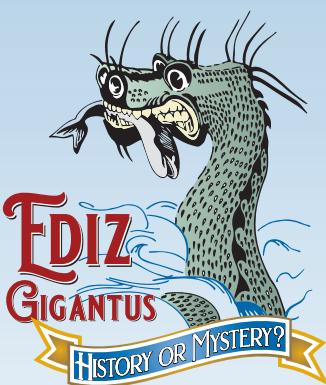
Jan 8 - Feb 11...Esther Webster Art Exhibit, Peninsula College.

March 14.....Minerva Troy Art Exhibit Opening, NOHC Research Library

Moving the Mail Exhibit dates and locations on page 4

### Research Library

933 West 9th Street, Port Angeles  
360-452-2662  
artifact@olyopen.com  
Open - Tuesdays & Thursdays  
9 am - 2 pm or by appointment



[www.nohc.catalogaccess.com](http://www.nohc.catalogaccess.com)  
New items added each month

### America's 250th

As many of you know from our previous newsletters or by turning on the evening news, 2026 is the 250th anniversary of our nation. The Center has taken the lead on coordinating America250 commemoration efforts around Clallam County, including themed displays, community events, exhibits and more. We are planning a series of community events that will center around a 100-day "commemorative period" that begins on Flag Day (June 14) and ends on September 14 (Constitution Day). Our next newsletter will have more information on these events including dates, locations and ways that you can get involved!



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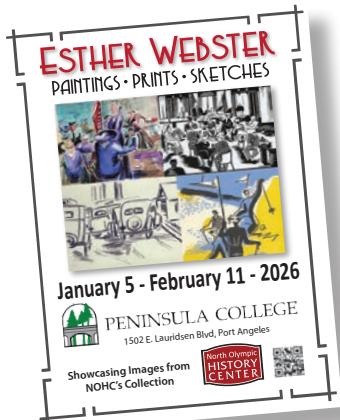
### NOHC on the Radio!



Director David Brownell discussing local history on the Todd Ortloff Show on KONP. Tune to 101.7 FM or visit KONP's website for recordings of their monthly program highlighting local history stories and upcoming programs and events at the Center.

### Esther Webster Show Moves to Peninsula College

Peninsula College will show our Esther Webster's Paintings, Prints, and Sketches exhibit. The show will run through February 11th. A new location will give a greater opportunity for the public to enjoy her work and acknowledge the History Center's mission of preserving and presenting our past.



## From the President

Hello everyone,  
My name is Steve Hargis. I am honored to announce that I was recently elected as the new President of the North Olympic History Center (NOHC) Board of Directors. First and foremost, I would like to thank Bruce Murray for his exceptional service as our 2025 President. Thank you so much Bruce!

A few things about me:  
Originally from Michigan, I joined and served 30 years in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1983 to 2013. I always thought that I would move back to Michigan after retirement, but in 2000 I got stationed in Port Angeles and immediately realized that this is where I wanted to spend the rest of my life once retired.

I have an Associate of Science degree from Peninsula college (construction and green building) and an Associate of Arts degree from Thomas Edison University. My degree from Peninsula college has served me well as I helped build dozens of Handicap ramps in Sequim with the Sequim Bluebills; 3 houses in Port Angeles with Habitat for Humanity; The Dream Playground (3 times); and building and managing the Winter Ice Village since it began 8 years ago.

I have always had a great interest in History. In 2021 I learned about and began conducting Port Angeles "Underground & Heritage tours". In search for more information involving the History of downtown Port Angeles and our underground heritage, I discovered the incredible resources at our very own NOHC located right here in Port Angeles. Soon after, I began volunteering with the NOHC and eventually became a member of the Board of Directors; I have to my great pleasure been involved with the NOHC for just over 4 years now.

Thank you everyone and I hope everyone had a great Holiday Season!  
Until next issue,



## Restore the 4 Update



(L-R) Corey Delikat (Parks Director), Mayor Kate Dexter, Scott Golding, Judy Stipe, and Steve Zenovic.



Ground breaking for the restoration of the Rayonier #4, creation of a shelter to house the locomotive and updating of the city park began on October 26. The foundation work for the canopy structure is complete. The canopy frame and trusses have been fabricated. The estimate for installation of the canopy is late February/early March (weather permitting). We'll then be on hold until the City takes care of the actual locomotive restoration work. As always, we still need support; we're currently about \$60,000 short of our overall fund-raising goal for Phase 2 work (canopy, restoration, and site access improvements).



Foundation work for the canopy structure and frame and trusses.

## Financial Presentation and Meeting



On December 1st, finance committee members met with Lora Brabant to discuss fundraising strategies and financial management. Lora is the President-Elect of the Washington State School Retiree's Association and has an extensive background in finance.

In addition the meeting reviewed website improvements, donation methods, managing estate and endowments strategies.

## 1953 US National Park Map Donation



Our thanks to Gary Norris for his donation of this beautiful map of US National Parks that we have hung in the Research Library. William "Bill" Todd at Shorey's Book Store in Seattle (closed in 2000) gave Mr. Norris the map in 1991. It originally resided in a ranger station somewhere in the Olympic National Park sometime after 1953, until someone sold it or donated it to Shorey's in the 1980s. Exactly how such a large map made it from the peninsula to downtown Seattle will remain a mystery. Bill told Mr. Norris at the time that if he could get it down off the wall of the store, that he could have it, and it remained in the Norris family for over 30 years, until 2025.

# Minerva Troy - New Show in our Research Library

A new exhibit showcasing the life and art of Minerva Troy will open on March 14th with a reception in the research library and continue through to the end of the year.



Caption: Mrs. "Minerva Troy outside her studio in Port Angeles Wn about 1908."

"Minerva Troy left us many ways to define her: artist, musician, pioneer daughter, wife, assistant to her husband in the Clallam County auditor's office and in the newspaper business, Alaskan, mother, divorcee, single mother, businesswoman, nurse, politician, community service worker and government employee. She fit all this and more into 77 years that took her from a comfortable Mid West home to the farthest United States frontiers of the Olympic Peninsula and Alaska, to World War I France, to Olympia, and to every corner of Clallam County." Dona Cloud



Ceramics painted by Minerva in NOHC collection.



Minerva in her studio.

## Annual Membership Meeting, History Tales Presentation, and Election.

Our Annual Membership meeting, Board of Directors Election, as well as the final History Tales Presentation was held October 19th at the Black Diamond Community Hall. President Bruce Murray, introduced the event with a short discussion on the new Five Year Strategic Plan as well as a review of the reorganization of committees. Executive Director, David Brownell reviewed the Strategic Plan in greater detail and presented a review of this past years activities. Following the meeting, Melissa Slager gave a presentation on her new book, *Contests of Strength*. The meeting concluded with a "Dessert Auction". Thanks to all the members who attended and we're hoping to make next years event even better.



Executive Director, David Brownell discusses the new Five Year Strategic Plan.



Dona Cloud wins the first dessert.



Author Melissa Slager giving her presentation.



### 2026 North Olympic History Center Board of Directors and Officers.

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Jan Whitlow, Vice President  
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John McNutt, Treasurer

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Ellie DiPietro  
Paul Gleeson  
Paula Hunt  
Larry Lang  
Bruce Murray  
Becky Shurmann

#### Executive Director

David Brownell

## Block Prints at the Art Center



Volunteers took our block printing "on the road" for a fun evening at the Port Angeles Art Center's Wintertide Maker's Market opening. It was a busy evening with families enjoying making their own printed cards.

## Newspaper Fundraiser

A "Help Save Local History" fundraiser was produced in December. Flyers for the annual Giving Tuesday fundraising day as well as throughout the month were posted on social media sites. In addition a post card was printed and mailed. The promotion has been successful and hopefully donations will continue.



## NOHC Volunteers "Take Over" the Skating Rink



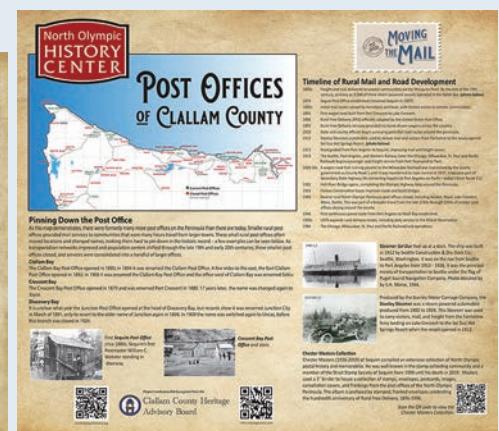
NOHC volunteered again this year at the skating rink in downtown Port Angeles. In addition to our general information table volunteers worked in the skate rental shed, ticket counter, snack shack making hot chocolate, and as the skate monitor out on the ice.



## Moving the Mail Exhibit Hits the Road!

We are happy to announce our travelling exhibit featuring history of mail delivery in Clallam County is available for viewing at the following locations and dates:

Jan. 16 – Feb. 1	Clallam County Court House Rotunda
Feb. 3 – Feb. 13	City of Sequim Civic Gallery
May 1 – May 17	Clallam Bay Library
May 17 – May 18	Forks Library
September	Port Angeles Library



# Sol Duc Through the Years

Miss Patty May Hassel, from the book *Jimmy Come Lately -- History of Clallam County*.  
 "According to Indian legend, two dragons in the Olympic Mountains engaged in a mighty and desperate battle. As they were so evenly matched neither could win. Eventually they both admitted defeat and retreated to separate caves where they still weep hot tears of mortification, creating both Sol Duc and Olympic Hot Springs."



Mid 1890s, before any structures are built.



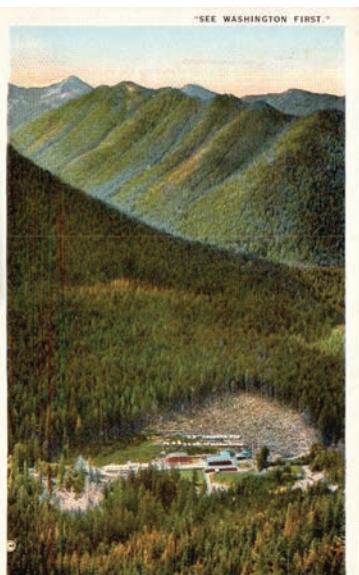
Hotel and cabins, 1920s



Early pool, possibly 1920s or 1930s.



Early 1900s, P.F. Harley Hotel.



Sol Duc Hotel 1912-1916

Sol Duc store about 1950s.



Sol Duc store interior.



Getting to the hot springs, 1920s.



Pool prior to 1980s.

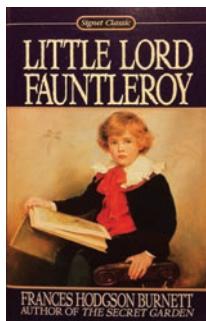
1980s to current. Photo from the [olympicnationalpark.com](http://olympicnationalpark.com) website.



## Fashions from the Past

Pictured is Stewart H. Brown (1900--1986) dressed in an outfit from our collection. In the early 1900s it was popular to dress boys in laced outfits based on the 1886 children's novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Stewart is the grandson of early Port Angeles pioneers Latham and Martha Stewart. His parents, Clarence and Daisy Brown were active in the Port Angeles community. The family donated a number of photographs and keepsakes in addition to this well preserved outfit.

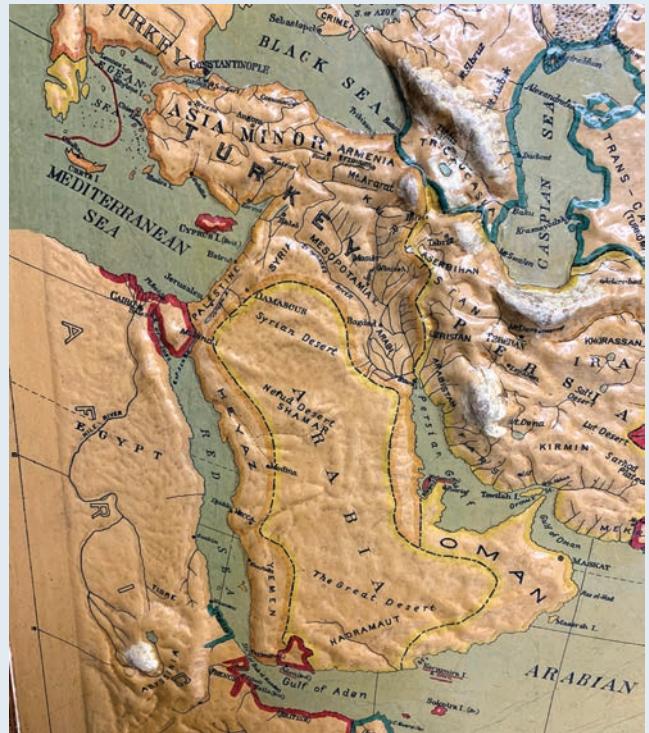
Object ID No. Kilt & Undershirt 1985.141.6, Jacket 1985.141.7, Shirt 1985.141.8, Calendar 1985.141.21a, Portrait 1985.141.216.



## Rare School Relief Maps

In our collection we have a very rare set of Atlas School relief maps. We have 8 maps in their original oak cabinet. Maps are Asia, Africa, Europe, and the World, dated 1907, Canada, dated 1909, and United States and South America, dated 1913. These would have most likely came from a Port Angeles school.

Atlas School Supply company was a Chicago-based publisher famous for antique, detailed relief maps and political maps. These often feature molded plaster/gauze, oak frames, and show continents like the US, Europe, and Africa. The maps highlight topography with exaggerated elevation scales for schools.



Look at these maps closely and you'll see how countries have changed dramatically through the years. No Iran or Iraq yet, just Arabia and Persia. See the large area controlled by Ottoman Empire. Or the map to the left, French Indo China, Burma and Siam. The political map of the world is an ever changing story and well documented by these fascinating maps in our collection.

Object ID No. 1998.52.3a-e

# A Tale of Two Swifts

*Before companies like Red Heart, Bernat, Lion Brand, Cascade, Berroco, and Carone became household names for crafters who knit, crochet, and weave, people had to produce their own yarns and threads. The process goes back at least 5000 years.*

In pre-industrial U.S. (prior to 1790), all domestic textile production was home-based. Families planted flax or cotton, or raised sheep, goats, and even dogs for fiber. One had to harvest the plant fiber and begin the process of making fibers suitable to spin, those steps included:

- Retting - rotting away the inner stalks of the flax plants.
- Breaking the flax - pounding it to make the stalks more pliable and fibrous.
- Heckling - splitting, straightening, and cleaning flax fibers by pulling the flax fibers through ever finer toothed combs, similar to carding.
- Removing the cotton fibers from the seeds.
- Shearing the animals.
- Carding for animal and cotton fibers to clean and align them to create a continuous web that can be further processed.

Only when those processes were complete could spinning and plying be done to produce hanks (looped bundles) of thread or yarn. Afterwards the hanks could be used to warp a loom and weave cloth or be knit or crocheted into garments, blankets, and other household items.

## It was intensive work.

Our collection has two swifts which tell the story of yarn manufacture prior to 1820 to the present.

Swifts have several names: reels, clock reels, niddy noddys, and weasels. They are used toward the end of the yarn-making process to measure spun thread or yarn into a neat, measured skein — a bundle of yarn that has a specific number of yards of yarn, usually eighty, because it was a practical length for various textile projects.

### "Pop Goes the Weasel"

The phrase comes from swifts like this one with a gear ratio of 40:1 and a reel circumference of two yards produced an 80-yard skein. After 40 revolutions, the mechanism would "pop," signaling completion



Our first is a hand-made, weasel swift from the early 1800s. It has hand-cut and whittled pegged joints; hand-cut arms, central pole, base, and a reel box with hand-cut gears from local hardwood. It was donated by Mabel Lane (whose grandfather, W.B. Main was a Blyn pioneer). The swift, and an accompanying spinning wheel, originally belonged to Mabel's great-great-grandmother, Sarah Knapp. The flax was grown on Sarah's father's farm (N.Y. State), and the wool came from sheep on the Main Farm. She wove all

of her own sheets and pillowcases. We also have a linen and wool coverlet that Sarah Knapp wove in preparation for her wedding to Steven Main in 1821. All three objects came to the North Olympic Peninsula with W.B. Main's family in the late 1890s. **Object ID 1986.75.2**

Besides its provenance, this swift is interesting because it's more than just a simple tool to wind yarn. It's a pop weasel, a mechanical yarn measuring device consisting of a spoked wheel with gears attached to a pointer on a marked face (which looks like a clock) and an internal mechanism which makes a "pop" sound after the desired length of yarn is measured (usually a skein). The pointer allows the spinners to see how close they are to reaching a skein. The weasel's gear ratio is usually 40 to 1, and the circumference of the reel is usually two yards, thus producing an 80-yard skein when the weasel pops (after 40 revolutions).

Our swift isn't standard; it has a diameter of 28.9646 inches and a circumference of 91.1064 inches. In order to get a yard of yarn/thread the wheel would have to revolve 2.53 times. In order to get a skein (approx. 80 yards) the wheel would have to revolve 202.4 times.



### From Necessity to Hobby

By the mid-20th century, yarn was commercially available, and swifts became tools of convenience rather than survival. This swift embodies the democratization of textile crafts, making them accessible to hobbyists worldwide.

Our second swift – a hobbyist's tool -- is much simpler and was manufactured sometime between 1947 and 1984 by craft supply companies like Lee Wards or Herrschners. It's made from plywood. It has four, sturdy, uniformly turned, baluster legs, and a reel with eight spokes. Each spoke ends in a crosspiece with knobbed tips that prevent the yarn from slipping off. It's style and simplicity reflect the transition from handcrafted textile tools to mass-produced, accessible equipment for hobbyists. **Object ID 2025.1.19**



Although most weavers and knitters don't have to go through the extensive process of producing their own yarn or thread before beginning their projects, yarn is still put up in hanks. It's handy to have a swift to hold the yarn and a ball winder to make cakes, balls, and skeins to work from. We are fortunate to have two swifts whose form and function span over 100 years of textile manufacturing history.



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# Membership

We connect the future,  
through the present,  
with the past.

Thank you for supporting the **North Olympic History Center**. Your generosity will help us connect with our north peninsula communities by increasing our outreach efforts including programs like our History Tales and Learning Our Landscape presentation series, creating new exhibits, adding to our ever growing digital library and artifact collection, and supporting our research facilities while maintaining our center's legacy as a community resource, sharing the region's cultural heritage for the enjoyment and education of us all.

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