



History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society

Volume 9 Issue 2 Spring 2011

Civil War Connections

by Jerry Bates

On Friday, April 12, 1861, at 4:30 a.m., Confederate artillery batteries opened fire on Fort Sumter—triggering the Civil War. This year, the nation is commemorating the 150th anniversary of the war's beginning.

Settlers in the Puget Sound were as far from the war as Americans could get. Most of the men in Washington Territory were relieved to have the Indian wars behind them and more concerned with clearing land or heading to the gold fields in Idaho than what was going on in Virginia.

In Washington Territory, politics was playing its typical role. The Territorial Legislature refused to declare its devotion to the Union while nevertheless raising funds for the Union cause. A middle road was taken; many respected Territorial residents migrated from the South and sat on the Territorial Legislature. Feelings ran high, yet no significant incidents of disloyalty or sabotage occurred. Most were for preserving the Union and divided on the issue of slavery and emancipation. As the Union started winning victories, the Confederate sympathizers kept a low profile.

The Territory, though remote from the action of the war, was home, for a time, to some of the Civil War's major players. A recent piece in the *Tacoma*

News Tribune by Peter Callaghan made an interesting point—some of the most famous generals pulled duty here in Washington Territory.

General Philip H. Sheridan fought in the Yakama Indian wars as a young lieutenant; William Tecumseh Sherman also fought in the Indian wars here. Ulysses S. Grant was former quartermaster captain at Vancouver. George McClellan explored for a northern transcontinental railway path across the Cascades. On the Confederate side, George E. Pickett, was onetime commander in the San Juan Island "Pig War."



**Civil War General
George McClellan**



**Washington Territorial
Governor Isaac
Stevens**

Washington's first Territorial Governor, railroad engineer and Indian agent, Isaac I. Stevens, was killed at the battle of Chantilly in Virginia.

South Hill and the War

We have no record of any white settlers living on the Hill during the war years. After the war many immigrants traveling the Military Road across the Hill and some that settled here, no doubt, either served in the Civil War or had close family members who did.

However, prior to the events leading up to the war, one famous Civil War general and our first Territorial Governor were connected to

the birth of a northern transcontinental railroad route that would be critical to the growth of Tacoma and Pierce County. The lives of early families on the Hill were also touched by the eventual railroad route.

Though it would go through many changes in route, ownership and management, the path followed by the Northern Pacific Railroad started with the efforts of Isaac Stevens and the “help” of George McClellan.

Isaac Ingalls Stevens, as well as being appointed Washington’s first Territorial Governor by President Franklin Pierce, also requested the president appoint him to lead a survey to establish a route for a future northern transcontinental railroad. The overly ambitious Stevens, with his hands full, enlisted his old friend and fellow West Pointer, Captain George McClellan, to help him with the route between Eastern Washington and Puget Sound through the Cascades. McClellan would later become President Lincoln’s promising but overly cautious general heading the US Army against the Confederacy, one of a series of generals Lincoln would appoint to lead the effort.

After viewing the rough terrain, and with little effort to prove his point, McClellan considered any route through the mountains of the Cascades impossible. Shortly after this a wagon train of settlers headed by James Biles and James Longmire had fewer reservations. Their party of 149 people and 53 wagons followed the Naches Pass Trail over the Cascades, proving this route could deliver settlers to Puget Sound by wagon.

Years after these initial efforts by McClellan and Stevens, the Northern Pacific Railroad* would tunnel under Stampede Pass, connecting Tacoma and Chicago during the summer of 1887. The route of the Northern Pacific basically followed Stevens’ survey crossing the northern Midwest into Eastern Washington.

After leaving the tunnel, the Northern Pacific trains wound their way over the western Cascade foothills to the Puyallup Valley, with whistle stops at Orting, McMillin, Alderton, Meeker

Station, and Puyallup with the terminus at Tacoma.

As mentioned, the tracks went through Alderton at the foot of South Hill’s eastern ridge. You may recall that (Fall 2009 newsletter *The Alderton Connection*) the town of Alderton, before the road to Puyallup existed, was the closest connection to the outside world for early families living here on the Hill. Alderton was a town with great prospects and hub of activity in that part of the valley, leading its rivals. The town was just a short distance down a path off the Hill following the Military Road. While doing their business in Alderton, our early residents had the railroad to thank for the town’s growth and the services it offered them.

Perhaps indirect, but a connection of events can be established between the famous Union Army general, our first territorial governor, the Civil War era and activities on South Hill in the late 1880s.

** In 1970 Northern Pacific merged with other lines to form the Burlington Northern Railroad.*

Sources for this article: Peter Callaghan *The News Tribune*, April 12, 2011; *Puget’s Sound*, Murray Morgan; *Washington Territory*, Robert E. Ficken; historylink.org, *Junius Rochester lecture*.

February General Meeting

By Debbie Burtnett

Our February guest speaker was Beth Bestrom, Manager of the Karshner Museum in Puyallup. Beth said she was “surprised and delighted to receive the invitation to speak...[she] loves to talk about Karshner Museum because it is such a unique place...only six school districts in the United States have this type of museum.”

Beth has been the Manager/Director/Curator and Custodian for the museum for three years now and clearly loves her job. She stated, “I love going to work every single day.”

Beth related the history of the building. “The original Central School was built on this site in 1886 at the price of \$3,030. That school burned in 1922 and was rebuilt as it is today and called Stewart Elementary. In 1962, a new, larger Stewart Elementary was built on the east side of that school. It was decided to put the museum at the old school in 1967.”

Beth’s talk reviewed Dr. Karshner’s biography. He moved to Puyallup ca. 1888, about age 14. In 1889, Beth read from an article, Puyallup boast-



Beth Bestrom of the Karshner Museum tells story of museum and history of Dr. Karshner

ed two banks; two general stores; four groceries; four confectionaries; four rest homes; five schools; ten churches; two photographic studios; one fruit grower association; two saloons; two drugstores; two dry goods stores; one furniture store; one mortuary; one feed store; one creamery; and many other establishments. The Karshners were always working and were a large family. The young, future Dr. Karshner had a job to clean and light lamps in a nearby church,” as well as various other jobs. “He attended the University of Washington for his undergraduate degree and taught for one year in the old Central School. Next, he attended Northwestern in Chicago and became a physician. He was the last horse and buggy doctor in Puyallup and delivered over 2,000 babies. He served twelve years on the Puyallup School District Board as President and helped dedicate a new wing at Good Samaritan Hospital.” (The first hospital in

this area was the Puyallup Valley Hospital, and the next, Good Samaritan, was built and opened in 1951).

Dr. Karshner and his wife had one son, a precocious child, who attended Maplewood Elementary, West Junior High, and Puyallup High School. The young man wanted to become a physician like his dad; unfortunately, he contracted polio and died very quickly in September of his senior year. The tragedy had a direct impact on the future museum.

Dr. Karshner and his wife traveled extensively. Avid collectors, they bought Native American artifacts; beach seashells; and after seeing the London Museum “with delight on their faces,” approached the school district back home to start a museum in 1930 to honor their son, Paul.

Beth read from a radio address by Dr. Karshner. “The aim is to improve a serious local defect... history and science belong in a teaching museum to fill a pedagogical need and our wish is to preserve the specimens...” [with instructions for the future]...”to educate kids.”

Beth testified to the intelligence of today’s children. “These kids are so smart; second graders love dinosaurs; and I especially enjoy working with the kindergartners...” She said the kids “share everything” including smelling the elephant’s foot. Touch screen and interactive computer technology is NOT found in this museum! “They get enough of that elsewhere!” explained Beth. Beth emphasized the importance of a hands-on museum by describing how the students “can touch animal skins and smell an elephant’s foot...” For example, a Mr. Morgan arrived with a box of raccoon, skunk, and weasel skins. He and his father trapped on the Hill, and “those skins are there.”

In response to a question about the protection of elephants and other wildlife, Beth responded, “the kids are very aware of how horrible the killing of African wildlife [has been]; e.g., umbrella stands were made from elephant legs, and the illegal use of their ivory tusks.”

Beth shared that some of the displays are kept out of sight, specifically one human skull kept

by the Curator William Matthews (when the museum was located at Puyallup High School). Other items include those sacred to our Native American people and “we try to return those things to the tribes.” And, it is federal law noted Beth. “Nearly all but one of the human remains have been repatriated.”

Beth told a fascinating story about such remains. The museum sent a necklace to a burial site in Vantage, WA via FedEx ‘next-day’ delivery. Meanwhile, the remains with which the necklace would be interred were in California. Beth sent the necklace--“a very fragile, beautiful necklace”--to arrive by 10 AM the next day to the site of the ceremony. Yet, Beth received a call at 1 PM on the delivery date. “Where’s my package?” asked the voice on the line. Beth got to work tracking down the package. FedEx searched and found the necklace went to California--even though a photocopy of the address label showed that the item had been correctly addressed to the place for the ceremony. FedEx called the woman in Vantage to explain. Beth elaborated, “...the necklace went to California where the human remains [were] and they were together overnight in the same airport; and they were [later] buried together.” Kind of spooky, isn’t it?

By 1967, Stewart Elementary was built and the Karshner Museum opened at its current site.

Beth loaned a book by Dr. Karshner, *Bearkiller*, to the Society. “He wrote his stories down and gave it to his brothers and sisters for Christmas, and out of this came his book,” she said.

March General Meeting

By Debbie Burnnett

Dr. Dale Wirsing, our scheduled speaker for March, had trouble finding us. After completing his scenic tour of South Hill Dale arrived to speak on a topic he had just presented the previous Friday evening — a discussion about the origins of the Tacoma Historical Society. He said the “most believable” story set the beginning at 1989-1990 in Bill Johnston’s kitchen in Tacoma,

along with Bob Evans, “a good hand in Tacoma’s history.” The “need for a historical society” was discussed. He said that the Ferry Museum, in operation in Tacoma at the turn of the century (1890s), was often confused with the Tacoma Historical Society. Out of this small group, related Dr. Wirsing, came the core membership. Even the Pacific Northwest Quarterly had only one article on Tacoma, so the descendants of Tacomans felt the need to fill “a black hole” as far as Seattle historians were concerned.

“When you study Tacoma,” related Dr. Wirsing, “you find that it was not a logging community nor a fishing village...the founders thought they were building the New York of the West and that is reflected in a legacy of architecture in the city.” He said the architectural structures made living in Tacoma more “amenable.”

Few people know that in 1901, Tacoma almost became our state capital. Tacoma offered Wright Park for the Capitol grounds, but the Wright family said “oh no, you don’t!--that is a park in perpetuity” and the legislation was vetoed, and the capital stayed in Olympia.



Dr. Dale Wirsing of the Tacoma Historical Society

Tacoma became a city in 1875, and experienced several boom and bust cycles including the Great

Panic of 1893 when many people were “wiped out” only to see the population double again by 1910. Therefore, stated Dr. Wirsing, there are good reasons for studying Tacoma through the vehicle of an historical society. Citing residential and commercial architecture, e.g., the Luzon Building, “studying local history enriches your life and explains your surroundings.” However, Dr. Wirsing warned, “it takes effort and money

to keep an historical society going.”

Some of the successful goals of the Tacoma Historical Society include:

- Provide safekeeping for community treasures
- Serve as a platform for good things to happen; for example, the Society’s effort to save the Murray Morgan Bridge with their clip boards and petitions
- Sponsor historic homes of Tacoma show since the 1990s, a ‘very successful thing:
- Sponsor public programs monthly including twenty or more programs in cooperation with Frank Toby Jones Center
- Provide re-enactors fun at Fort Nisqually
- Republishing Hunt’s History of Tacoma, first published during the Great War era; today \$600 a set on the Internet; now beautifully bound and indexed based on current interests at \$250 per copy

April General Meeting

By Debbie Burtnett

Carl Vest introduced our guest speaker, Marianne Lincoln, who he has known since the early 1990s. “In the past, she held community meetings in Spanaway; is a member of the Bethel School Board and a long-time community activist; a professional computer consultant; and an historian for the Graham Community Plan. She works as a local activist and historian for the Descendants of Fort Nisqually..Welcome Marianne!”

Marianne Lincoln added a bit more to this background. Born Marianne Scott on April 24 on Canyon Road; a graduate of Bethel High School, she found, as a member of the community plan organization, that there was not enough information about the middle of Pierce County...”it’s totally incomplete.” She focused her PowerPoint talk on the Oregon Territory, Lewis County--The History in the Middle of Pierce County.

She began by explaining that the Hudson Bay

Company used to own the middle part of this area from Fort Nisqually to Puget Sound when the Territory became part of the United States in an historic 1846 decision. The area was bought from the HBC for \$760,000.* She further clarified: “We started out as part of the Oregon Territory--and Pierce County was Lewis County before we became Washington Territory.”



For the April meeting Marianne Lincoln talks on the history of middle Pierce County, a subject often overlooked in her view.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: *The 19th century saw the United States setting territorial boundaries based on national interests and Manifest Destiny. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams arranged a Convention in 1818 that set the border of the Northern U.S. at the 49th parallel from Michigan west to the Rocky Mountains. The Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819 set the Western boundary of the U.S. along the Sabine River from the Gulf of Mexico north to the Arkansas River to its source, and then north to the 42nd parallel and west to the Pacific. In the early 1840s, Great Britain claimed areas near the Canadian border in Maine and Minnesota. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 ended these disputes in the East and Midwest, but both nations (Britain, US) extended the mainland boundary along the 49th parallel west from the Rocky Mountains to Puget Sound, the current boundary between the U.S. and Canada, in 1846. However, this agreement was challenged in the San Juan Islands resulting in the Pig War, and as a result, the current boundary deviates from the straight line of the 49th parallel.*

All that remained to secure was the southwestern boundary with Mexico, and that meant war. Washington Territory was formed in 1853.

Marianne Lincoln related a brief story of the Longmire-Biles wagon train in 1853--conquering that incredible cliff by descending it after stopping and camping overnight at Government Meadow. In 1854, the Medicine Creek Treaty was negotiated on December 25 and 26. South Puget Sound tribes gathered in the Nisqually Delta where Governor Isaac Stevens negotiated for the tribes as a Federal Indian Agent. The Nisqually representatives didn't want to sign the treaty--they wanted the river and tidelands as most reservations were not on rivers. When the Indian Wars began 1855-56, non-combatant Indians were relocated to Fox Island and the settlers relocated to Ft. Steilacoom.

In dispute was land at the confluence of Muck Creek and the Nisqually, good salmon creeks.

John Montgomery, an employee of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company at Spanaway (*Spanuch*) established Camp Montgomery** and Old Military Road [near present day Clover Creek Elementary and was also the last campsite for the Naches Trail]. He located his home on the Old Military Road. Five Hudson Bay employees were jailed at the block house built there, charged with treason. The house was located at 160th Street and 36th Avenue East (by Clover Creek Elementary School). These men were charged with treason for aiding and abetting "hostiles". Actually tried were John McLeod, Lyon A. "Sandy" Smith, Henry Smith, John McPhail and Charles Wren. Henry Murray; Peter Wilson; and William Benston were not held or tried. Marianne finished her talk by giving background on what happened to these men; their marriages; and what happened in the areas now known as Roy, Frederickson, and Muck Creek on Fort Lewis.

Marianne Lincoln was applauded for her stories of local history. A number of Society members discussed maps shown by Marianne with her and enjoyed refreshments after the meeting.

** This dollar figure may not be correct. In 1869, the US and Britain entered into an agreement whereby the U.S. paid \$200,000 for all properties of the HBC south of the US-Canadian border. It is*

possible that this figure is more accurate.

*** Although Marianne made this point, it should be kept in mind that Camp Montgomery did not exist when the Longmire party came through in 1853. They stopped at the Mahan Ranch on the west side of Clover Creek. Camp Montgomery was not established until 1858 during the Indian Wars and was located on the east side of Clover Creek. It is true that both locations are very close and for conversational purposes can be considered as one. Historians like to be a bit more precise--the minutes are fine as recorded, and we should keep in mind the difference.*

Woodland School Reunion

Woodland School alumni attended their 22nd reunion at Johnnie's in Fife May 7. Organized by Ruby Petersen Wilkes, Alice Petersen Neeley, and Dorothy Swalander Norris, the annual gathering has been held since 1989. Approximately forty alums attended this year



Woodland School alumni enjoy memories and meeting old classmates at Johnnie's in Fife.

including Virginia Newman from Ohio.

Emcee Ruby Wilkes opened the gathering with the flag salute; a song, 'My Country 'Tis of Thee'; and a prayer of thanks for "bringing us together again." Just like their early school days! Ruby

recounted memories of “feeling happy” when with “my family and our fellow graduates of Woodland School.” She graduated after eight grades at Woodland.

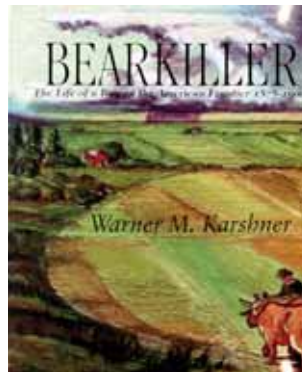
Ruby read memories recorded by Dorothy Norris. “Our back fence lines connected us with the Wilkes. In Springtime, we picked flowers and made May baskets and placed them on the front doors of our friends. We did Johnnie Jump-ups on the way to school. We played on the monkey bars and the merry-go-round. In class, the boys sat on one side [of the room] and the girls on the other. At Christmas, we had bags of candy, nuts and tangerines. I sat by the heat register in the winter to keep warm. From the kitchen there were good aromas...we had good, hot lunches. We had no school bus and many of us walked long distances to school and back. Along the way we shared our joys and values... in programs, we gathered with cheers--loud and clear. It was there that we felt at home...”

Possibly the oldest teacher in WA state, Hazel Whitford Miller Goheen, who turned 101 on May 3, was present with her daughter, Mrs. Frank Serviss. Hazel taught in 1931, 1932, and 1942, bringing her young daughter to work in a time before that was fashionable.

While Woodland School faced three crises in its history—the 1949 earthquake; consolidation; and the razing of their “...precious school.” Perhaps the most challenging was consolidation into the Puyallup School District--a divisive issue. Bill Fox distributed “No! to Consolidation” flyers, was reported, and “got many swats for it.” Consolidation ended attending all eight grades before high school [to grade 6]-- changing the camaraderie and wonderful memories of a more innocent time.

Dorothy Norris described this year’s reunion as “noisier than usual...this was good because classes up to 1965 attended and one from 1966. Several had never attended before and it was a time for visiting and remembering...so many had catching up to do.”

Overall, the reunion “went very well,” declared Alice Petersen Neeley. Next year’s reunion at Johnnie’s is already booked for May 5, 2012.



Book Review:
Bearkiller:
*The Life of a Boy on the
American Frontier
1878-1900*

By Joan Vosler

*When Beth Bestrom, Curator of the Karshner Museum, presented the Society with **Bearkiller**, an autobiographical series of stories by Dr. Warner M. Karshner, Joan Vosler immediately borrowed the book and read it.—Editor’s note*

“This is one great story! I feel it should be required reading in every [Northwest and Plains] school or in U.S. History class.

I can relate to many of the stories since I raised four sons and had four brothers. They had many stories, too. But God must have sent angels to look over the Karshner boys for they had too many close calls to call it luck.

The stories take us through the history of this country. Easily recognizable and vividly described were Two Great Depressions; the Dust Bowl of the Midwest; the Opening of the West; and the Gold Rush. (Franklin Karshner, Bearkiller’s father, followed his wanderlust to Alaska, where he lived many years, dying on his Alaskan homestead site).



Joan Vosler

[My] Uncle Bill talked of the cougars screeching and making the hair stand up on the nap of his neck...I experienced that feeling in reading this book. Their [Karshners] meetings with bear, elk, cougars, and other wildlife were frightening!

Tough times made tough people. Thank God for the survivors!”

Bearkiller may be purchased at the Karshner

Museum, 309 Fourth Street NE in Puyallup or from Amazon.com.

dlandpz@earthlink.net.

This information taken from the Spring 2011 Northwest Trails newsletter of the Oregon-California Trails Association, Northwest Chapter

Naches Pass Field Trip



Dennis Larsen will lead a NW OCTA field trip up the west side of Naches Pass on Saturday July 9, 2011. He led two trips to the pass last summer for the Naches Pass Coalition that were well attended and quite successful. Dennis chose this date because the area is

Experience the Naches Pass

PHOTO BY DEBBIE BURTNETT

closed to ATV

traffic until July 15, after which it's too crowded on a weekend. We will meet at 8:30 a.m. at Greenwater, Washington, in front of the store (where the gas station is—a small place, with only one store). Greenwater is on US Highway 410 about 15 miles east of Enumclaw, WA.

The trip involves about three miles of walking, mostly on a jeep road. We may encounter some snow as the snowpack is very heavy this year. Please wear some type of hiking boot as tennis shoes are not a good idea. The hike is mostly level with a couple of minor ups and downs.

Bring a picnic lunch as we will tailgate at the conclusion of the hike, and in the afternoon visit a couple of other sites along the Naches Trail such as the famous “Cliff” down which the covered wagons of 1853 were lowered with ropes.

Please sign up to participate via e-mail at



Society President Bob Ballou and Debbie Burnett visited Mill Ridge Village retirement community in Milton WA, in March, to talk with residents about telling their personal histories while living on South Hill, to be recorded for our archives.

Don't miss the June Luncheon General Meeting! June 21st

This is our last meeting of the season before summer break. Come and share your stories of times past on the Hill. Bring your old photos!



In Memoriam

The South Hill Historical Society regrets the passing of

Ernest Hopp

June 9, 1925 - March 31, 2011

From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, *poppa-ben2002@yahoo.com*, 14602 106th Avenue Court E., South Hill, WA 98374.

Also, don't forget that we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Dues, donations, etc., are fully deductible from your income taxes if you are able to do so. If you need a receipt for tax purposes contact Ben.

Updated Roster Available

A printed roster including members' home and e-mail addresses, plus phone numbers is available upon request (*restricted to members only*). Call me—Ben Peters—at 253-845-7028.

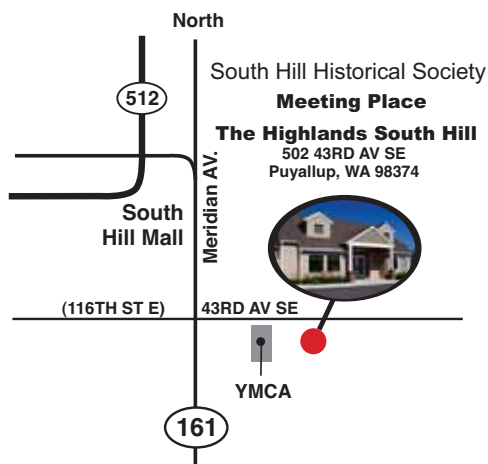
Dues Reminder

I will attach a sticky note to the Society newsletter mailed closest to your renewal date.

Where to Find Us

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month, 11:15 AM, (*no meetings July and August*) at the Highlands in the Community Center. This complex is located at 502 43rd Ave. SE, adjacent to and east of the Mel Korum YMCA.

We welcome you to our monthly meetings. For more information, contact Paul Hackett at **(253) 845-7691**.



Our Current Members

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Andy G. Anderson | Marvella Massie |
| John & Ruth Anderson | Olive McDonough |
| Jim & Elizabeth Anema | Laurienne Stewart Minnich |
| Bob Ballou | Ronald Moe |
| Jerry Bates | Carolyn Nelson |
| Susan Beals | Dorothy Nelson |
| Katherine Bennett | Juanita Nordin |
| Marilyn Burnett | Mark & Dorothy Norris |
| Debbie Burtnett | Christopher & Gloria O'Kelly |
| Roger Bush | Ron & Lois Pearson |
| Vernon Cox | Wes & Suzy Perkinson |
| Jeff Cunningham | Ben Peters |
| Dave & Patti Curtiss | Robin Reich |
| Bob Crabb | Bill Riley |
| Karen Day | Bernice Fisher Rinehart |
| James H. Dixon | Roy and Sheila Rinker |
| Pat Drake | Vern Rockstad |
| Joan Ellis | Helen Rohlman |
| Linda Forsberg | Earl Root |
| Arthur & Luverne Foxford | Stan & Margery Salmon |
| Don & Mary Glaser | Nancy M. Scraggin |
| Hazel Whitford Miller Goheen | Bonnie Starkel |
| Calvin & Amy Goings | Lori Stock |
| David Hackett | Bill Stover |
| Paul Hackett | Marge (Crosson) Swain |
| James Hawley | Ralph & Yvonne Thorpe |
| Cecil & Doris Herbert | Margo L & Joe Tucci |
| Evelyn Swalander Hess | Carl Vest |
| Charles & Maybelle Hoenhaus | Neil & Celia Vincent |
| Matt Holm | Joan Vosler |
| Dale Huff | W. Lynn Williams |
| Leslie & Velma Huff | Lenore Nicolet Winton |
| Jim Kastama | Ed Zeiger |
| John Knierim | Hans Zeiger |
| Art Larson | |

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- President, **Bob Ballou**
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South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name _____

Address _____

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Home E-mail Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____ Renewal, check here

Annual Dues: Society membership \$25.00

Note: Please do not send cash.

Make check or M.O. payable to South Hill Historical Society and mail with this application to:

**SHHS Membership, 14602 106th Avenue Court E.
South Hill, WA 98374-4905**



14602 106th Avenue Court E.
South Hill, WA 98374-4905

To: