



HERITAGE CORRIDOR

History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society
South Hill, Pierce County, Washington

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The National World War II Museum

by Debbie Burtnett

A Note from the Editor

Our Editor-at-Large, Debbie Burtnett, now living in Hoover, Alabama, recently visited the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana. As Debbie will tell us, workers in New Orleans were busy building "Higgins Boats" during the war. Many who lived on South Hill during that era were busy building merchant ships and small escort carriers between the ends of Hylebos and Blair Waterway on the Tacoma Tideflats. Some of our members recall the daily migration of South Hill residents down to the shipyards on Commencement Bay in support the war effort. Some went to other sites such as Plant II in Seattle to build B-17s. We are proud of those members of our society that belong to the "Greatest Generation" and those on South Hill who took part in the war effort on the home front as well as the battlefield.

Celebrations and anniversaries in 2014 abound—from the British Rock & Roll Invasion to the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee report on smoking to the Civil Rights Movement and its subsequent legislation. It's the centenary of the outbreak of The Great War and, in June, the world marked the 70th anniversary of D-Day at Normandy, France. Commemorations around the world included the one at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

Why would the National World War II Museum be in New Orleans you ask? (See related story and photos.)

When author, historian, and founder Dr. Stephen Ambrose met with General Eisenhower in 1964, the former president asked him if he'd ever met Andrew Higgins. Dr. Ambrose replied, "No." President Eisenhower responded, "That's too bad,



The National WWII Museum

he is the man who won the war for us ... If Higgins had not designed and built those LCVs, we never could have landed over an open beach. The whole strategy of the war would have been different."

What began as a small building with dioramas, films, and interactive displays

set in New Orleans, the home of Andrew Jackson Higgins, has now evolved into a campus of multiple buildings with Congressional designation since 2003 as America's National WW II Museum—a private 501 (C) 3 corporation.

Founded by historian and author, Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose, the National D-Day Museum opened on June 6, 2000. Its first curated displays focused on the anniversary of the amphibious invasion of Europe via France's Normandy Beach by the Allies. Familiar voices from 60 Minutes narrated the various displays and interactive maps along with recorded oral histories from men who were there and their personal mementos—uniforms,

equipment and toiletries, letters and photos from home—as well as the Higgins boats and suspended-in-air airplanes that greeted the visitors in the lobby. Fast forward to 2014.

Today, the campus is home to the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion—showcasing the large artifacts of the war and the D-Day/Normandy exhibits including war on the Home Front and in the Pacific; the Solomon Victory Theater which shows the 4D Tom Hanks production of *Beyond All Boundaries*; the new U.S. Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center which creates a picture of America mobilized for war; and the Stage Door Canteen where music



These concrete structures were designed to protect German workers at often bombed railway and industrial targets.

and entertainment of the ‘Greatest Generation’ is relived. Across the street, staff and volunteers restore artifacts in view of the public at the John E. Kushner Restoration Pavilion. One can enjoy lunch at the American Sector Restaurant or at the Soda Shop with options created by Chef John Besh. Several gift shops are located on the campus.

Boeing Company that also supported the years-long project of the acquisition and restoration of the World War II B-17 bomber, “My Gal Sal.” During the war, the Boeing Company took the lead with other aviation companies including Douglas Aircraft, McDonnell Aircraft, North American Aviation and the Hughes Aircraft Company, to maximize war production. The Seattle Boeing Plant II facility went from the production of sixty B-17s per month in 1942 to 362 per month by 1944. That’s 98,965 aircraft or 28% of America aircraft!

A special exhibit, on loan from the Smithsonian through October 2014, deals with another subject that West Coasters know well—the Japanese-American Internment camps. Entitled “From Barbed Wire to Battlefields: Japanese American

Experiences in World War II,” the exhibit tells the story to 120,000+ Japanese-Americans who were excluded from their homes, businesses, and farms by President Franklin Roosevelt’s Executive Order #9066 affecting WA state, Oregon, California and southern Arizona. American citizens (60%) of Japanese ancestry were moved to relocation centers, such as Puyallup’s Camp Harmony, and resettled at ten internment camps. The exhibit also honors the service of 33,000 Japanese-Americans who served in the military in the Army’s 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Included in the display is the Congressional Gold Medal presented to Tokuji Yoshihashi of California. Among the poignant photographs and displays are birth certificates of children born during the four-year internment and souvenirs of a life lived behind barbed wire, not free.

Reviews of the museum and its exhibits by recent visitors are positive: “This is a fantastic museum and well worth the time and money to visit.” One reviewer mentioned the artifacts — swords, uniforms, guns, tanks, boats, bombers and other airplanes, etc., marveling at the variety. Another visitor said, “The most amazing thing is how balanced everything is—the Japanese, Italian, and German perspectives are given ... VERY worth seeing!”

Of particular interest to the Pacific Northwest would be the Boeing’s US Freedom Pavilion, funded in part by a \$15 million gift from The

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After 1942, it was clear that the United States had to produce more ships and planes than the enemy could destroy if the Allies were to prevail. And, there would have to be an offensive assault.

Andrew Jackson Higgins **“The New Noah” – Adolf Hitler**

When the Navy and Marines required landing craft for the troops, they forced a competition among ship designers. The winner was Andrew Jackson Higgins.

Nebraska-born Andrew Jackson Higgins had established his business, Higgins Industries, to build boats for the oil industry’s exploration of the Louisiana Coast. The search for oil required a shallow boat that could run up on a bank and then extract itself. His design, called the Eureka, was composed of wood rather than metal for flexibility. He used the design to compete for Navy

contracts—and his LCVP, based on the Eureka design, was a favorite of the Marines.

The Eureka was 36 feet long and 10 ½ feet wide with a protected propeller powered by diesel. It held 36 men or a jeep and a squad of a dozen troops. These “Higgins boats” were carried across the Atlantic on LSTs designed specifically for their size and along with other landing craft, gave the Allies excellent mobility.

Once Higgins won the military contract, he set up several factories and assembly lines throughout New Orleans—employing an integrated workforce (30,000 at its peak) of blacks, women and men, the first such in New Orleans. He paid high wages and was a role model of patriotism for his employees, inspiring workers with posters and sign that said “The Man Who Relaxes Is Helping the Axis.”

However, Higgins was a genius at design and mass production. His designs included patrol boats (PT); Landing Craft Tanks (LCTs) a/k/a LST (Landing Ship Tanks—by definition, a ship is a craft over 200 feet in length, and were designed by the British)—which could hold four to eight tanks; along with Landing Craft Infantry (LCIs) which carried 200 soldiers and variations; LCM (Landing Craft Medium); and the LCVPs which



The LCVP Higgins Boat, National WWII Museum

carried both vehicles and personnel. By the end of 1943, the Allies were involved in the amphibious landings in North Africa, Sicily, and Salerno. They became committed to an offensive assault on the continent of Europe via Occupied France in order to end the war.

The Higgins’ boats carried infantry ashore in the Mediterranean, France, and in the Pacific theatre. More American men went ashore in Higgins boats than any other craft. Both General Eisen-

hower and Dr. Ambrose assessed the importance of the effort by Andrew Jackson Higgins, as “the man who won the war for us, and it is a shame that he has been forgotten by the nation and by the city of New Orleans.”

Living History at the Puyallup Fish Hatchery



The Puyallup Historical Hatchery Foundation Education Center, adjacent to the Puyallup Fish Hatchery.

Society members last visited the Puyallup Fish Hatchery in 2004 when our group hiked up the Maplewood Springs ravine, located at the hatchery site, in search of any remains of the Old Line Trolley trestle.

The hatchery has special significance for our Society. It’s nestled at the foot of the Hill, on our northern historic South Hill boundary. Historically, the site covers the most notorious part of the Old Line Trolley system as it made its way up the Maplewood Springs ravine. The trolley traveled a treacherous rickety trestle up to South Hill and the Woodland Station. From there it traveled due West (today’s 104 ST E) to Fern Hill, where it connected with the Tacoma Trolley system. Read about the trolley derailment and history of the Old Line in the September 2004 issue of this newsletter. (All newsletters are available on our website southhillhistory.com).

Today, much has been happening down at the hatchery. A new historical society has been launched and is off to an impressive start. We were invited to visit the Puyallup Historical Hatchery Foundation on July 15th. Society member emeritus, Paul Hackett, was well prepared

to inform their members, with documents and maps, of the historical significance of the hatchery site. Our officers were taken on a hatchery tour—always fun!—especially for the fishermen in our group. But we were most impressed by the new society, its facilities, and the enthusiasm of our hosts, Patty Carter and Richard Johnson. They had a fascinating story to tell about how they and their neighbors rescued the hatchery from becoming a commercial seafood processing company.

Patty Carter and a small group of neighbors wanted to save the neglected hatchery (built in 1949) and prevent it from becoming a commercial fish processing facility in their backyards. The neighbors and other community groups “raised a ruckus.” The seafood company backed out. The hatchery supporters had discussions with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to create a hatchery organization in 2012, and on July 27, 2012, they received the state’s blessing and the society was born. Patty was amazed at how things magically came together—especially the many volunteer’ efforts. What’s truly amazing is the refurbishment and transformation of an old home on the property into the society’s center of activities — again all volunteer effort. The foundation now has a facility with meeting rooms, a very impressive education center with many wall displays, and easy access for the handicapped. Thanks to the community efforts the hatchery is still a hatchery and the Puyallup Historical Hatchery Foundation has become a valuable community attraction and education center.



South Hill members visit the Puyallup Historical Hatchery Foundation. Left to right, Bob Ballou, Richard Johnson (Hatchery Society), Wes Perkinson, Patty Carter (Hatchery Society), Terry Maves, Jerry Bates and Paul Hackett.

“Write Your Life Story!” — Ora Clark

Vice-President Terry Maves introduced his friend, Ora Clark, at the General Meeting for May. Ora’s talk to our Society members contained a wealth of information for those contemplating or involved in memoir writing. Ora has published two books *The Life and Times of a Mid 20th Century Family* and *Grandpa Remembers The Great Depression*. For our attendees he had both books available for purchase. Also available, a free handout — a guide full of tips on how to get started.

Ora was born and raised in the Midwest. He was a World War II veteran in the Army Air Corps. “Not Air Force, not Army — Army Air Corps!” Ora emphasized. He worked for Boeing twenty-five years and is a proud father of five children. Ora recently lost his second wife and his eyesight.



Ora Clark

Ora Clark describes himself as having a “passion for sharing.” He wants all of us to consider our own stories and take his challenge to write it down. “My purpose here is to try to encourage you to write your life story, to leave a legacy to your grandchildren and great-grandchildren. A legacy is of untold worth.”

Ora says he always hears people say “I can’t write... never written well.” He doesn’t buy that excuse. “Just sit down and imagine you’re talking to your grandchild and just write.” He said “you will find memories trigger other memories, and all of sudden you have so many you have write a list so you don’t forget!”

Many issues come up when you write your memoirs. One problem that Ora hears quite often is writing that includes others—your memoirs might be embarrassing to them. Ora said, “Go ahead and make it a first draft. Sometimes you must leave things out, especially if children of those you are writing about will be hearing dark things for the first time. It’s best not to cause family

problems.” Marital issues can also be sensitive subjects. Ora continued with personal examples of the above situations. Sometimes it was necessary for him to leave episodes in others’ lives out of his work.

Ora explained, “There’s a wealth of information out there to take advantage of.” The web is full of sites. Tacoma Community College has an online course instructing how to write your memoir. “However,” noted Ora, “a real classroom has its advantages. You can share your writing with other people, critique your writing, give each other ideas, feed off each other.” There are groups of “memoirist” people who have written their life stories, along with those who share their writings and methods.

You don’t have to write your story; you can use an interview format, if you have someone to ask you questions — make a video or tape recording.

There’s an association of personal historians that will write your life story for you, but, Ora cautions, “that can be expensive — several thousand dollars.”

Ora concluded with a Q & A session. Many in our group shared their experiences and sources for information and help. The handout Ora compiled is full of useful tips, methods, and sources for research. If you missed the presentation, contact Society Vice-President Terry Maves. He may have extra copies.



Ora Clark has authored two books, *The Life and Times of a Mid 20th Century Family* and *Grandpa Remembers The Great Depression*.

Editor's Note: An excellent guide to interviewing, prepared by the Smithsonian Institution, can be downloaded at <http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/pdf/interviewingguide.pdf>

Scholarship Awarded to RHS Grad

The SHHS Scholarship Committee worked hard sorting through many applications for the third year—offering a \$500 scholarship award to deserving high school senior(s) bound for college. Applications were accepted from Emerald Ridge and Rogers High Schools. All of the applications were worthy, but the committee stuck to our cri-

Ben Peters awards Olivia Inglin the SHHS scholarship at the Rogers High School scholarship reception May 29th.



teria including the requirement that the applicant must major or minor in History.

A Rogers High School applicant was judged especially worthy. Olivia Inglin, whose sister Sarah Anne won the award in 2012, was selected as

the 2014 recipient. Olivia is a whirlwind of hard work—

engaging in numerous school activities and community volunteer services. Olivia maintained a 3.8 GPA and, while in high school, also attended college courses at Pierce College, earning enough credits to shorten her Bachelor’s degree requirements to two years. One wonders when she might sleep! She will major in History and Political Science at Western State College.

While at Pierce College she discovered her true interest — “why the world works the way it does.” After college graduation, Olivia would like to work within the museum system as a curator or an archivist. Long-range plans include earning a Master’s degree so she can teach at a two-year university.

Rogers High school held an impressive and well-attended scholarship reception in May. Approximately fifty local organizations and memorial rep-

representatives spoke on behalf of their candidates. Again, the SHHS thanks its anonymous donor for financially supporting our scholarship fund!

It's the last one



South Hill as well as the Puyallup Valley had hop farms, and hop barns. Major operations on the Hill were on the Muehler Ranch and the Kupfer and Mosolf Farms—all long gone. The last known remaining barn in the valley stands at the bottom of South Hill's eastern ridge. The Puyallup Historical Society at Meeker Mansion hosted a tour of this historic barn thanks to owners Pat and Laurie Sunnen. The Society provided a luncheon of bratwurst, roll, slaw, and soft drinks.

Pictured above is the barn as it appears today, a little east of the intersection of Military Road and 122nd ST E and SR 162. It was built around 1909. The old hop barn has been well preserved over the years. It's just as it was when used to dry hops before going to market shortly after the turn of the 20th century. Many farm implements associated with a hop-drying remain in the barn.



Preparing a tasty lunch for the tour event were Andy Anderson, SHHS member, along with fellow Puyallup Historical Society at Meeker Mansion member, Bob Minnick.



Making History Real

Last May and June, members Terry Maves, Ben Peters, and Paul Hackett were invited to Ridgecrest and Woodland Elementary Schools. The current curriculum requirement for all state fourth graders is knowledge of state history. Our Society representatives took the Oregon Trail part of that history out of their textbooks and made it especially real for the kids. The North Fork of that trail went through their community; in the case of Ridgecrest, just blocks from where they sat. Our 'teachers' did a terrific job relating the story of the Naches Trail crossing of 1853—having the fourth graders imagine they were in a wagon heading west. One student commented, "You told us the real story that wasn't in the textbook." Terry Maves asked the students probing questions such as "What are you going to do when you get there?" and "How do you exist on a wagon train?" The teaching staff was enthusiastic, stating "We like to see the kids involved in something rather than the traditional learning sources," said Terry.

The above drawings are the kids' way of saying thank you—depicting the maps, SHHS brochure, and artifacts that Terry, Paul, and Ben brought to their classrooms.

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.

Dues Reminder

I will attach a sticky note, with a renewal form, to the Society newsletter mailed closest to your renewal date. **No need to fill out the membership form unless there is a change of some kind.**

In Memoriam

The South Hill Historical Society
regrets the passing of

Olive McDonough

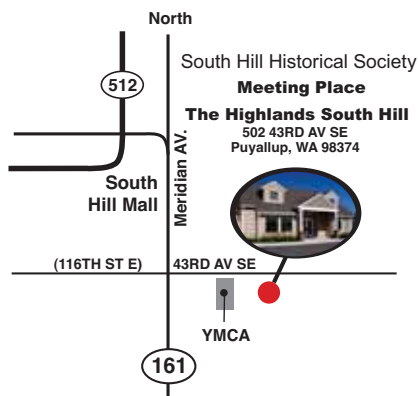
The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month, 11:00 AM, (no meetings July and August) at The Highlands in the Community Center. This complex is located at 502 43rd Ave. SE, adjacent to and east of the Mel Korum YMCA.

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

Our Current Members

Andy G. Anderson	Laurienne Stewart Minnich
Andy & Ruth Anderson	Kaye Murrell
Elizabeth Anema	Carolyn Nelson
Marion Armstrong	Dorothy Nelson
Bob Ballou	Juanita & John Nordin
Teresa Best	Mark & Dorothy Norris
Jerry Bates	Gloria O'Kelly
Katherine Bennett	Ron & Lois Pearson
Marilyn Burnett	Wes & Suzy Perkinson
Debbie Burnnett	Ben Peters
Vernon Cox	Bill Riley
Dave & Patti Curtiss	Bernice Fisher Rinehart
Karen Day	Roy and Sheila Rinker
James H. Dixon	Vern Rockstad
Pat Drake	Helen Rohlman
Joan Ellis	Earl Root
Arthur & Luverne Foxford	Stan & Margery Salmon
Ira Gabrielson	Bonnie Starkel
Don & Mary Glaser	Lori Stock
Paul Hackett	Bill Stover
Alberta Hagen	Marge (Crosson) Swain
Cecil & Doris Herbert	Ralph & Yvonne Thorpe
Evelyn Swalander Hess	Margo L. & Joe Tucci
Wilma Walsworth Hinshaw	Lee Van Pevenage
Alan & Linda Hoenhous	Carl Vest
Joe & Rhoda Hoenhous	Neil & Celia Vincent
Maybelle Hoenhous	Joan Vosler
Matt Holm	W. Louise Walsworth
Leslie Huff	W. Lynn Williams
John Knierim	Lenore Nicolet Winton
Mike Kupfer	Ed Zeiger
Art & Lorraine Larson	Hans Zeiger
Terry Maves	Allan S. & Ellen M. Zulauf
Olive McDonough	Beverly Zook

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South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name _____

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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: