



# History On The Hill

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

Volume 14 Issue 2 Spring 2016

HERITAGE CORRIDOR

## 'New' School Bell rings for Woodland Elementary

by Jerry Bates



**The Woodland Elementary School Bell Celebration held, April 13, 2016, was a well attended event including the student body plus former alumni and guests. The presentation with student participation included the story of the stolen 1884 bell and its replacement.**

THE OLD Woodland School bell sat high atop the school, its ringing heard by generations of students since territorial times. The school was established in 1884. South Hill Historical Society member Joan Parks Vosler remembers hearing its first ringing every school day as a child in the 1940s, reminding students they had 15 minutes to get in line at the school entrance. The bell was heard far and wide. The old school is now just a memory but — its bell survived mounted on a static display outside the entrance of the current Woodland Elementary School until July of 2014— when it was discovered missing. The priceless bell, no doubt, was cut up by thieves and recycled for its brass value of approximately \$200.

However, this sad story has a happy ending. The old bell has been replaced with a sister bell.

That sister, or brother, bell was given as replacement for the missing bell by Mr. Casey Cox, Assistant Superintendent to the Puyallup School District. The Cox family had a school bell that originally sat on top of the old Elk Plain Elementary School in Yelm, WA torn down in the 1930s. It's identical to the Woodland bell, made by the same manufacturer, C.C. Bell Company, Hillsboro, Ohio, in the same year.

When Mr. Cox's grandparents went windmill shopping in the 1950s, they got a school bell

thrown in as part of the deal “if they wanted it.” Mr. Cox said yes and it stayed in the family for over 50 years, used on their 12 acres of property to call the family to dinner.

Kristi Giste, teacher at Woodland tells us when Cox heard the sad news he offered his family's old school bell as a replacement. The school eagerly accepted his generous gift. They sent facilities workers to dismantle and transport the heavy bell to a local company that offered a free restoration, PMI Truck Bodies Inc. The bell was stripped, sandblasted and powder-coated to like-new condition. A company spokesman said “they knew it was the right thing to do.”

Woodland Elementary invited our Society to be guests at their bell re-dedication ceremony, April 13th. Many Society members were present including Dorothy Swalander Norris with members of her family and Pat Drake and husband Dan, they met and were married while both taught at the old Woodland School.

### **The Ceremony**

After a welcome by school principal Heather McMullen and Paul Dumontet, Principal Intern, fourth grade teacher, Kristi Giste, gave a history of the old bell and the story of its replacement. Kristi introduced selected students who embellished the story. Max Tomlinson and David Debruler read memories from SHHS member Joan Parks Vosler's “Grade School Days.” Raven Clinch read memories of Mildred King Kashporenko, and CeCe Sanchez read a poem and memories of the late SHHS member, Olive McDonough, Nathan Smilonich thanked Assistant Superintendent Cox and the team (including SHHS). The final reading by 6th grader Akaiyah Vine distilled the true meaning of this fascinating story. *“It is said that teamwork is the ability to work together towards a common goal and that when ordinary people come together, they can perform extraordinary feats. Woodland really is a place where teamwork and education continues to ring true.”*

The ceremony concluded with words from Vice Principal Jim St. George and the ringing of the bell, once again, at the site of the old Woodland School.



**The restored replacement 1884 Woodland School bell is identical to the stolen bell, manufactured by the same company in the same year. Now residing in its new home, the bell is safe inside the Woodland Elementary School lobby.**

## **Society Fund-Raiser Garage Sale at the Highlands!**

**JUNE 24-25**

**Get rid of that unused stuff!  
To donate items contact  
Beverley Zook  
She'll pick up at your house!**

**(253) 292-1454**

# Retracing Ezra Meeker's Second Trip Over the Oregon Trail

by Jerry Bates

THE YEAR 2006 marked the centennial celebration of Ezra Meeker's "second" trip over the Oregon Trail. In 1906, then in his late 70s, old Ezra left the Meeker Mansion to backtrack his first journey west on the Oregon Trail in 1853. Ezra was convinced the Trail was being forgotten and plowed under by an expanding population. His mission was to gain publicity by retracing the route with oxen and covered wagon, establishing markers and monuments along the way.

Perkinson along with Ruth and Andy Anderson were part of that group. Wes and Suzy, with comments by Andy Anderson, and the aid of a video of the group's journey, took us along on the 2006 event for the February General Meeting.

Wes explained that in planning for the trip, they soon realized they needed help with arranging venues all the way over to the Midwest. They teamed up with an eager Oregon Califor-

Fast-forward—one hundred years. To celebrate the centennial, the Meeker Mansion folks (Puyallup Historical Society at Meeker Mansion) after two years of planning, were ready to reenact this 1906 journey.

Our members Wes and Suzy



The centennial group.



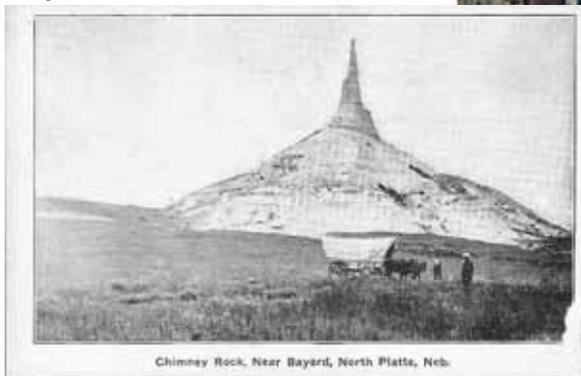
The 2006 centennial travelers recreate 1906 Ezra Meeker postcard seen below.



Wes & Suzy Perkinson

nia Trails Association (OCTA) and the Forest Service. OCTA has chapters all along the trail route that could coordinate and organize the planned events with the host cities. The Meeker Society group gave shows furnishing speakers, reenactors, a gift shop, and Ezra Meeker's original wagon complete with an oxen team furnished by Dixon Ford and his

grandson Blake. Such teams are very rare today. The oxen team is used for the Mormon Church's historical events.



Chimney Rock, Near Bayard, North Platte, Neb.

They presented twenty-two shows during the first two weeks, "We were very busy," said Wes.

Before leaving they had dress rehearsals in Centralia, Chehalis, the Washington State Historical Society, and Puyallup, and embarked on the trip July 23, 2006.

They were accompanied by 100° days with no relief until they reached the high altitudes of South Pass, Wyoming. They gave shows in Tumwater, WA; The Dalles OR; Pendleton, OR; Baker City, OR; Durkee, OR; Boise, ID; Three Island Crossing State Park, ID; Idaho Springs, CO; Rock Springs, WY; South Pass, WY; Lander WY; Casper, WY; Scottsbluff, NE; and Kearney, NE; Alcove Springs, KS; St Joseph, MO; Independence, MO; and the final show was presented on the return trip at the Whitman Mission National Historic Site at Walla Walla, WA.

Wes's responsibility was getting the wagon where it was supposed to be. The wagon had its own custom trailer towed behind Wes and Suzy's motor home. Wes and the group had to set up each show involving the wagon, sound equipment, and traveling gift shop. "We arrived early and left late," said Wes.

While viewing the video, Wes, Suzy and Andy made comments and answered questions.

The Meeker wagon used for the trip belongs to the Meeker Society—one of the wagons Ezra built prior to his 1906 trip. The original running gear and some of the wood sections are part of today's restored Meeker Society wagon. The original wood is easily spotted by its darker color.

Andy explained the Oregon Trail was defined at that time as extending from the jumping off points of Council Bluffs and Independence to The Dalles, Oregon region. No single path was followed for most that trip with wagons fanning out on the prairie trying different routes or deviating in different directions for the best camp sites. However, one of the paths followed by all was through South Pass, the essential geographical feature making wagon travel possible across the Continental Divide. Andy explained, "You don't realize you're on a mountain pass; it's a very slow rise; it hasn't changed in 150 years and can be driven today by car."

Thank you, Wes, Suzy and Andy, for the look back on your Oregon Trail adventure!

## Rare South Hill Map



**Mark Starkel (left) grew up on the Starkel Turkey Farm, a longtime poultry business on South Hill. When his mother passed he inherited this rare 1952 map showing a very different South Hill, "no freeway, no Rogers High School, nothing" said Mark. He dedicated the map to our Society.**

## Puyallup Tribe Shares History

*by Jerry Bates*

**OUR SOCIETY** during its years of research has uncovered few, if any, written accounts of Puyallup Indian activity on South Hill. The pioneer Kupfer family, the earliest family to take root on South Hill, near starving, survived their first winter thanks to the generosity of the Puyallup Tribe. Few local published accounts or references exist. A large blank spot remains in our research regarding the Puyallup Tribe and South Hill or the tribe's history in general.

Thankfully, that blank spot is starting to fill in. As we learned during our April general meeting a rich oral history has been passed down within the tribe. Most surprising for our group, this oral history contains references to South Hill. We learned the Hill played an important role in the Puyallups' lives and culture.

Our guests for the April general meeting were

representatives of the Puyallup Tribe. They were Nicole Barandon, Information Outreach Specialist and Brandon Reynon, Assistant Director/Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Historic Preservation Department.

Their presentation covered a large amount of information regarding tribal culture and history, only a fraction of which will be summarized here. Nicole began with the site of the Puyallup village near today's Tacoma Dome; the location was a crossroads for many tribes traveling through the area. Visiting tribes always left with more than they came. The idea of "ownership" was an alien concept to the generous Puyallup Tribe; they would gladly share whatever they had.

Nicole and Brandon covered the iniquities and communication breakdown of the Medicine Creek Treaty between local tribes and Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens. This taking of Puyallup land for future white settlement led to the Treaty that initiated the Indian Wars of 1855-56. Besides being left with a fraction of their traditional land over the next 30 years, European diseases would wipe out 90% of the Puyallup population.

We learned the Puyallup tribe was a matriarchal group. Sons married into the woman's family. There were no "chiefs" but rather Lead People, men or women, their status determined by what they were good at. No bloodline hierarchy of kings, queens or chiefs existed. According to the oral history of the Puyallup Tribe, the Puyallup fair had its origins as a Puyallup Indian potlatch. The potlatch spot is likely close to the current fair site. The eventual yearly event evolved into the tribe including white settlers partying with games, footraces, tugs of war etc. After 1900, the "fair" took the form we are familiar with today. Indian Potlatch included ceremonies and recreational activities such as the bone game (!) that used no money; gambling more interesting wagers, among them the promise of labor, personal belongings or even sometimes wagering family

to marriage when the stakes got high. Today, the stakes never reach that level, but bone games still occur during the summer months. Perhaps, it can be said this gaming culture carries on today with the popular Indian casinos.

### **South Hill**

Yes, South Hill is part of the Puyallup Tribe's story! Brandon told of skirmishes/raids during the Indian war that occurred along the Fort Maloney-Fort Steilacoom supply route. This route followed the main Indian Trail up the Hill from the valley along what is today's Interstate 512 and (then) military roads. The supply route continued over the Hill to Fort Steilacoom.



**Nicole Barandon & Brandon Reynon  
of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians**

South Hill was the tribe's "abundant resource" for many things including berries, black bear, elk, deer, and even roots. The young males were trained all over the South Hill, including today's Bradley Lake area. Brandon told us the Hill had no documented permanent Puyallup villages but rather hunting camps equipped with traveling shelters that could be torn down and re-assembled, constructed of split cedar planks or tule mats and

strapping.

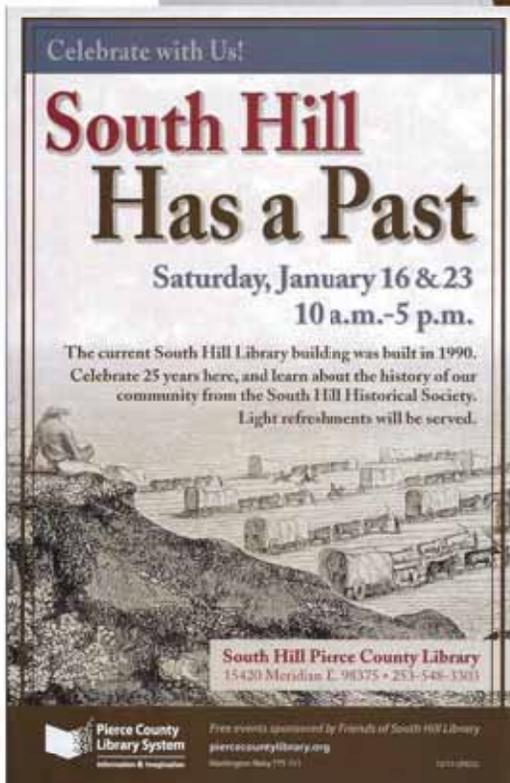
Probably the most important resource the Hill offered was the cedar tree. Nicole told how absolutely essential cedar bark was for the tribe. It provided clothing, baskets, hats, numerous utensils; it was even woven into mountain goat wool blankets. The cedar bark was bug repellent—"mosquitos and bugs hated it." The trees were carefully stripped of small areas of bark so as not to kill them and elder trees were spared. Their dugout canoes were made of fallen cedar logs. Nicole explained the trees with rotted centers saved much labor hollowing the big logs. These techniques for canoe building and stripping of the bark is still used by the tribe today.

Nicole, at the beginning of the presentation stated, "We have so much to learn from each other." We have much more to learn from them!

# South Hill Library Celebrates 25 Years

JANUARY 16th & 23 The South Hill Library celebrated their 25th Anniversary. What better way to celebrate than feature the South Hill Historical Society! Sponsored by Friends of the Library, our group of volunteers set up library and lobby displays. Society archivist Wes Perkinson arranged borrowing the Puyallup Historical Society's Meeker wagon. Society members in period costumes

greeted library patrons in the lobby—and many questions were asked and answered. The historic covered wagon was set up outside with display materials focusing on the historic wagon and the trip west on the Oregon Trail. Special thanks goes to our Public Relations Coordinator Beverley Zook for this very successful event.



Left to right, Pat Drake, Beverley Zook, Susan Beals, Suzy Perkinson, Wes Perkinson



# From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

*Welcome to New Members*

**Steve Lukasiak  
Mark Starkel  
Meghan Sullivan**

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, poppa-ben2002@yahoo.com, South Hill Historical Society, Box 73582, 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 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.**

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month, 10:45 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.

## **In Memoriam**

The South Hill Historical Society  
regrets the passing of

**Mike Kupfer**

# Our Current Members

Andy G. Anderson	Gary Leicht
Andy & Ruth Anderson	Steve Lukasiak
Elizabeth Anema	Terry Maves
Marion Armstrong	Laurienne Stewart Minnich
Bob Ballou	Carolyn Nelson
Jerry Bates	Dorothy Nelson
Susan Beals	Juanita & John Nordin
Katherine Bennett	Mark & Dorothy Norris
Teresa Best	Wes & Suzy Perkinson
Marilyn Burnett	Ben Peters
Debbie Burtnett	Bill Riley
Vernon Cox	Gail Rinehart
Dave & Patti Curtiss	Vern Rockstad
Robert & Lynn Daughtery	Helen Rohlman
Karen Day	Earl Root
Pat Drake	Stan Salmon
Joan Ellis	Mark Starkel
Arthur & Luverne Foxford	Lori Stock
Ira Gabrielson	Meghan Sullivan
Mary Glaser	Marge (Crosson) Swain
Paul Hackett	Ralph & Yvonne Thorpe
Alberta Hagen	Jade Trevere
Cecil & Doris Herbert	Margo L. & Joe Tucci
Evelyn Swalander Hess	Lee Van Pevenage
Wilma Walsworth Hinshaw	Carl Vest
Alan & Linda Hoenhous	Neil & Celia Vincent
Joe & Rhoda Hoenhous	Joan Vosler
Maybelle Hoenhous	W. Louise Walsworth
Matt Holm	W. Lynn Williams
Leslie Huff	Lenore Nicolet Winton
Dan Ingram	Ed Zeiger
John Knierim	Hans Zeiger
Myrna K. Kucklick	Allan S. & Ellen M. Zulauf
Art & Lorraine Larson	Beverley Zook

## South Hill Historical Society Officers

*President, **Bob Ballou***  
*Vice-President, **Terry Maves***  
*Secretary, **Pat Drake***  
*Public Relations Coordinator, **Beverley Zook***  
*Research Coordinator, **Carl Vest***  
*Treasurer, **Ben Peters***  
*Archivist, **Wes Perkinson***  
*Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, **Jerry Bates***

**History On The Hill is published quarterly**  
**Editor Jerry Bates, Editor-at-Large Debbie Burtnett**

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# South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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:

**South Hill Historical Society, Box 73582,  
South Hill, WA 98374**



Box 73582  
South Hill, WA 98374

To: