

STEILACOOM HISTORICAL



MUSEUM QUARTERLY

Volume 23, Number 4

Winter, 1994

A Christmas Present for Annie Steilacoom

A very unique Christmas gift in 1906 was a houseboat given to Annie Steilacoom by various charitable people of Steilacoom and Tacoma. Daily newspapers noted the occasion with stories and photographs.

Annie, a granddaughter of Chief Steilacoom, had lived with her husband John and son John along the shores of Puget Sound for many years. Following the death of her husband in the summer of 1906, the structure where they had lived burned to the ground. Pitching a tent at the water's edge, she mourned.

Mrs. Frances Haskell, hearing of Annie's sorrow, requested materials and funds from the community to build a proper home for her. A houseboat was built in Tacoma and towed to Steilacoom just before Christmas. It was newly furnished in bright colors with curtains at the windows. The papers recorded that Annie danced with joy through her new home.

The Tacoma Daily Ledger, December 25, 1906

The Steilacoom Historical Museum Quarterly is issued as the official publication of the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association. Mail correspondence to the Editor, Box 88016, Steilacoom, WA 98388. Telephone: (206) 584-4133

Joan Curtis, Bette Bradley—Editors

Wolf Fletter.....President Wolf Fletter.....Treasurer
Jeanne BirneySecretary Arline BrightmanInterim Director
Arline Brightman.....Past President
Trustees: Marilyn Cullen, Dave Hudson, Jane Light, Sandra Menter-Berry,
H. L. Shellabarger, Sandy Strother, David Welch, Doug Wing

Front page photo: Annie Steilacoom's houseboat, located near present day Sunnyside Beach. She supported her family by digging clams, picking wild berries, and making sturdy baskets.

President's Letter

This is my last letter as president of the Association, and I leave office with mixed feelings. One always feels regret for the things that were not accomplished and at the same time an elation for things that were...and so it goes.

I barely touched on the volunteers at the Annual Dinner, but I meant what I said. The Association *absolutely* could not get along without their efforts. They are wonderful and very much appreciated. And just think, we have all your names for next year!

Speaking of next year, it will be our 25th anniversary. We would like to celebrate in a special way, so if any of you have some ideas, please let us know. We have some of our own, like a day cruise of the Sound, but haven't formed a committee and gotten official to date.

Now I would like to talk about the Task Force. This is a very special group of people, chaired by Dave Hopkins, and consists of Nancy Covert, Lenore Rogers, Linda Evanson, Don Yoder, John Watson, Gidge Campbell, Sandra Menter-Berry, and Jean Swanson. We met them officially at our May 10 board meeting. They all had accepted the Task Force commitment previous to that evening, and we outlined what we hoped would develop into a set of recommendations for a Long Range Plan or goals for the Association. This spaced to a five

year plan and a ten year plan, bringing us to the year 2004. We wished to have membership input in the planning and promised them clerical or other help on request, but the methods they used and answers they came up with were to rest on their shoulders.

We asked some old-time members, some not so old-time and some fairly new members to serve on the Task Force so that we would get a good cross-section of opinions and ideas. We sure were right on that score.

They developed a questionnaire for the membership. The survey result is based on response from 135 members. All of the answers were tabulated with the following importance to the membership:

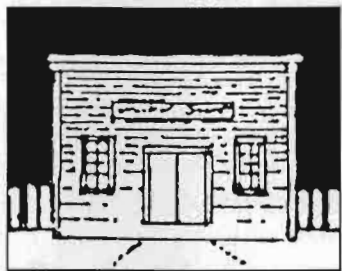
- Expand Association activities beyond present levels
- Develop a full range of Association activities, in addition to preservation and display functions related to the museum
- Increase membership and the active involvement of members
- Save and restore the Orr home
- Develop a positive cash flow while preserving the Bair Store as a restaurant/museum/gathering place
- Our Association is rich in membership resources. Many members are willing to work as volunteers as well as to give more money.
- *The Quarterly* is very much appreciated...and is well read.

The membership response is a portion of the report. The balance is the work of the Task Force and is presented in a very provocative manner. They have come up with some solid suggestions, new thinking, some old thoughts, and have done a beautiful job in presentation. They have reproduced copies which we had for the membership at the annual meeting. If you did not attend and would like a copy and live in Steilacoom, please stop at the museum from Friday to Sunday between 1 and 4 p.m. for a copy. If you live out of town, please call, and we will mail it to you. I guarantee you will find it interesting.

I will leave you with personal wishes for a bright and happy
1995.

Arline Brightman

Wagon Shop Update



The Wagon Shop sign is up, and the foundation surface for the bricks has been poured. Edward Chaffee & Associates provided the plan and sketch, and John Korsmo coordinated the foundation, which was needed in order to accommodate the disabled.

Orders for the bricks continue to come in. It is not too late to order a brick. Don't miss the opportunity to have your family name inscribed on a brick. Or give a brick as a birthday present or as a memorial. Bricks are \$50 to \$149. Send a check to SHMA, Box 88016, Steilacoom, WA 98388.

Salmagundi

- ★ Winter hours at the museum are 1-4 p.m. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays during the months of December and February. The museum is closed in January.
- ★ The Orr Home will be closed during the winter months.
- ★ *Steilacoom's Church*, a history of the Oberlin Congregational Church, may be purchased in the museum for \$10.00. Val Dummond, who wrote the interesting book in 1983, has donated twenty-five copies to the Association.
- ★ A rededication of the plaque "Dedicated to the citizens of the Town of Steilacoom who entered the armed forces of their country," was held on November 11, 1994, commemorating the 134 men and women from Steilacoom who served in WWII. See the *Quarterly*, Spring, 1985.
- ★ Membership applications are available at the Bair Store. Now may be the time to renew your membership in the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association or give a membership to a friend or neighbor.

A Lovely Christmas Dinner

Candlelight and greens set the scene for a Colonial Christmas dinner and the annual Association meeting held on December 3. Members enjoyed a prime rib and Yorkshire Pudding meal, concluding with the traditional flaming pudding. The Puyallup Valley Brass played background music for the evening.

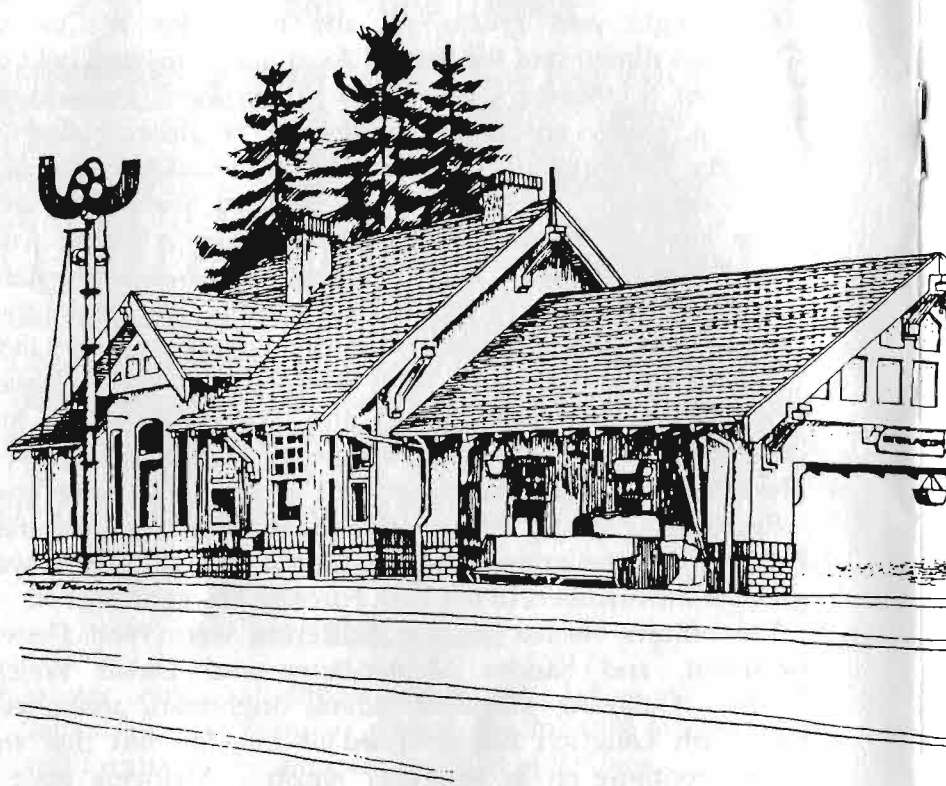
The business meeting was highlighted by a report from David Hopkins, Task Force Chairman, and a slide show presented by Don Yoder. In six months the committee, composed of members Jean Swanson, Lenore Rogers, Linda Evanson, Gidge Campbell, John Watson, Don Yoder, Nancy Covert, Sandra Menter-Berry, and David Hopkins, has developed a long range plan with specific goals and objectives. The report was available for members to take home for review.

Recognizing the extensive amount of work the committee had put into the project, the Lee Merrill Fellows Award was given to the members of the Task Force by Margaret Merrill.

The officers elected for the 1995 year were Wolf Fletter, president, and Sandra Menter-Berry and David Welch, trustees. Outgoing president, Arline Brightman, announced that Trish Laughlin had resigned as director, but that she would continue on as volunteer registrar. Members gave a toast to Trish and Arline for the tremendous amount of work and dedication they have given to the Association.

New features of the dinner this year included the opportunity to have pictures taken, in the old-fashioned sleigh, by Jackie Dock and a raffle of a "goodie" basket from the Bair Store. These were well received, with Bob Volkmer winning the raffle.

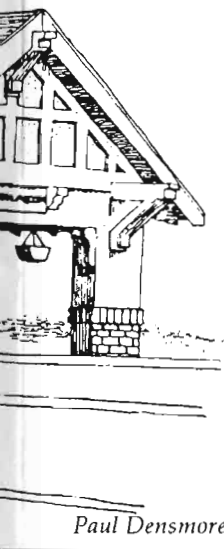
Beverly Woods, assisted by Jane Light, coordinated the dinner, with Rosa Kreger in charge of meal preparation. They were aided by the following committee heads: Patty Forsyth, Anne Daubenspeck, Nancy Covert, DeEtte Burdue, Lenore Rogers, Doug Wing, Milt Davidson, the Bair Family, Judie Davis, Anna Zeigler, Vera Croce, and Ginny Sumner. All who attended enjoyed a most pleasant evening.



The Train Station Revisited

Earlier this month, on December 15, there was a celebration of the 80th anniversary of the first train to come to Steilacoom. Burlington Northern opened the station to the public, and Jack Sage, a retired Burlington railroader, was on hand to answer questions asked by the visitors. He commented that the station was in remarkably good condition, even though it has been closed almost twenty-five years. Burlington Northern bought the railroad in 1970, and shortly thereafter Steilacoom was eliminated as a stop, and the station was closed.

The building has close ties to Steilacoom other than merely being placed here. It was designed by architect Arthur P. Merrill, the father of Lee Merrill, a Steilacoom resident in his



retirement years. Arthur Merrill, accompanied by his wife and Lee, arrived in Tacoma in January, 1909, from Boston where he had worked after graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He entered into a partnership, and on February 15, the firm of Potter and Merrill opened its office in the Provident Building in downtown Tacoma. The new firm submitted plans and won the contract to build the Tacoma Building, which is still in use at 1021 A Street.

In 1913, Merrill was hired to design the Steilacoom train station in expectation of the train finally coming to town. For Merrill, this was a welcome task, as each summer he had rented a cottage in town and moved his family there from Tacoma. When his son, Lee, retired to Steilacoom in 1969, he said, "It was here that my boyhood memories began." In the early 1900's, Steilacoom was a popular vacation spot along the water, and many families returned year after year. Lee's wife, Margaret, recently recalled her husband's stories about the family's annual trip to Steilacoom on the streetcar, while all their baggage and goods traveled in a rented horse drawn carriage. The cottage they

rented still remains at 202 Sixth Street, having been remodeled and added to over the years. In 1964, Sara and James Lint bought the property, where Sara lives today.

Growing up and working in Tacoma, Lee became a well-known photographer and recorder of Pierce County events and local history. When he retired to live in Steilacoom, he and Margaret were active in the newly formed Museum Association. In 1972, when Lee was the president, he established *The Quarterly* to ensure the long range continuity of the Association. Looking to the future, hopefully the historical link between the Merrills and the train station can be retained, with the Museum Association and Burlington Northern working together to preserve the station as another landmark of the town's past.



Patty Forsyth serves as a docent in the Orr House at Christmas, 1989.

Docents Christmas Tea

A Christmas Tea honoring the docents of the Museum and the Orr Home was held on December 11 at the Bair Store. The Association extends its appreciation and thanks to the following members who interpret Steilacoom's past to visitors throughout the year:

Museum chaired by Marilyn Siemens and Nancy Anderson

Barbara Carey	Ginger Gillis	Pat McCutcheon
Elsie Claypool	Cy Happy	Mike McMullin
Betty Coats	Jenny Hollister	*Margaret Merrill
Nancy Covert	Priscilla Huber	*Pat Ness
Marilyn Cullen	Bernice Jensen	Louise Norberg
Sue Davidson	Marge Johnson	Carol Pearson
Dorothea Davis	Sue Killam	Mary Petersen
*Kay DeLozier	Jimmy Kohten	Edith Reese
Jackie Dock	Edna Korsmo	Jack Sage
Marian Feaster	*Sara Lint	Mary Schaumloeffel
*Patty Forsyth	Betty Maliska	Hilda Scott
*Florine Fowler	Maxine Mathias	John Siemens

*Jean Skamser	Heather Thomas	Billie Wolfe
*Evelyn Smith	Robert Volkmer	Peter Wolfers
Bob Stevens	David Welch	*Beverly Woods
*Sandy Strother	Dale Welfringer	
Barbara Studebaker	Carol Wetherholt	

Orr Home chaired by Joan Curtis

Marjorie Erickson	Jan Lucas	Rosemary York
-------------------	-----------	---------------

Marian Hinds	Lenore Rogers
--------------	---------------

Dorie Hixson	Judy Tiemann
--------------	--------------

*Indicates docents who also serve at the Orr Home

Rules for Teachers—1872

Occasionally we hear some of today's teachers talking about how tough things are. Listed below are the rules for teachers posted by a principal in 1872 in New York.

1. Men teachers may have one evening a week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
2. Women teachers who marry and engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
3. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden to society.
4. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
5. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intentions, integrity and honesty.
6. The teacher who performs his duties faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.

A more general observation of a holiday as perhaps never witnessed here or elsewhere than was that of Tuesday, Christmas. Everybody in town and country, civil and military, seemed to have made preparations in advance for a fitting celebration; and everybody either gave or partook of a dinner to or with friends, or kept open house or had calls during the day.

At the garrison, the day was observed in the usual social manner; the officers providing tables laden with all the luxuries of the market, and making welcome all whom inclination might lead to visit them....

The best display in town was that made by Mrs. Coyle, the generous hostess of Thompson's Hotel. She had a table spread the whole length of her spacious dining room; and covered with viands of every conceivable description from the most delicate and fantastic forms of confectionery to the more substantial articles of poultry and fish and flesh, all combining under a very tasteful arrangement, one of the best displays we ever saw.

Mrs. Coyle had the pleasure of welcoming probably the largest assemblage of guests that ever sat down to a dinner here, and did the honors of her table in very creditable style. Not only here, but at other places, everything passed off happily and to the satisfaction of everybody.

Altogether it was one of the most pleasant holidays we ever enjoyed.

Puget Sound Herald, December, 1860

Of Christmas Past

The Village Blacksmith - All persons knowing themselves indebted to the undersigned are respectfully requested to settle up before the 1st of January, 1875, thereby enabling me to start in on the new year with good spirits and plenty of cash customers.

Peter Runquist

The Steilacoom Express, December 17, 1874

Letter to the Editors

Editor's note: The following letter was received in October, 1994, after publishing the Quarterly story "A Town Called Du Pont."

Dear Joan & Betty:

Dorothy Snyder, a close friend, sent me a copy of your *Museum Quarterly*, Volume 23, Number 3. She knew I was born in Du Pont and lived in Du Pont until I left in 1940 to continue work with the Du Pont Co. in New Jersey and points beyond as a Chemical Engineer.

I'm not sure she knew that the cover picture of the *Quarterly* was that of my grandfather's family. My grandfather and his family with others were sent from the Barksdale Plant of the Du Pont Company in Washburn, Wisconsin, to construct and operate a new plant at Du Pont, Washington. My mother appears to the left of her mother in the back row.

I am writing this to request that you send me two copies of the issue discussed. I will forward them to my two sisters who were born in Du Pont and left Du Pont in 1942 when their Army husbands left Ft. Lewis.

Page 4 shows typical houses. My lifelong friend, a Portland resident, was born in the first house. My parent's home was at the end of this street—just out of the photo.

Bob Johnson, Steilacoom, and I grew up across the street from one other. I, too, was a member of the fire brigade with him.

Respectfully,
William P. Nicklason

In Memory

Of those who through the years have served the Association

Charlotte Matthias	John Smith
Andy Isacson	Virginia Herstrom
Alberta DeChant	W. H. Holmes
Sara Jane McCutcheon	Cynthia Savage

The Association has a special card that can be used when a Memory Gift is made. It can be a monetary gift to the Association or a contribution to purchase an inscribed brick to be part of the walkway to be installed on the Orr property.

Merry Christmas



Happy New Year



Steilacoom Historical
Museum Association
P.O. Box 88016
Steilacoom, WA 98388

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Tacoma, WA
Permit No. 272

Address Correction Requested

Jane & Weldon Rau
3035 Edgewood Dr. S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501