

# STEILACOOM HISTORICAL



## MUSEUM QUARTERLY

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Volume 25, Number 1

Spring, 1996

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### William Clay Thompson

*The following article was written by John Derville, Jr., grandson of William C. Thompson, Sr. His mother was Katie Thompson Derville. John spent many happy summers with his grandparents in Steilacoom. He has retained close ties with the community, and he is an Association member.*

**W**illiam Clay Thompson created the only payroll company Steilacoom had during the 1910s and 1920s. It was called the Steilacoom Sand and Gravel Co., located at Sunnyside Beach. Bill was born December 26th, 1860, in Balbrough, England, and emigrated to the United

*Continued on page 6*

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

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*Front page photo: The William C. Thompson Family, 1897, after the family was reunited. William Sr. and wife Mary with children Evan, William, Jr., and daughters Katie and Hannah.*

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## Quarterly Begins 25th Year

As Lee Merrill began his presidency in 1972, he proposed that the two-year-old organization have its own publication. The Board of Directors quickly responded with a motion "to publish a quarterly for the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association. The aim is to improve communication with the Association and to further interest in historical information." The first *Quarterly* was sent to the membership in March, 1972. Lee always felt the *Quarterly* was one of his best ideas, and he was very proud of it.

With this spring issue (Volume 25, Number 1), the 25th year begins. It is interesting to look back over those years and the 87 issues and realize that not only has the history of Steilacoom been documented in the publication, but also the history of the organization has been recorded—exactly as proposed nearly 25 years ago.

## President's Letter

Our Association is off to an active and exciting new year! We are making big strides as a result of clear direction from the 1994 SHMA Long Range Planning Task Force, dedicated Board

members, numerous volunteers, and a hard-working new Director for the Association.

This progress is evidenced through restoration and repair of the Orr Home foundation and roof (to begin very soon), and expansion of the Bair Store's kitchen, storage, and restrooms (also to begin soon). We are being guided by Tacoma architect Gene Grulich, who is well known statewide and nationally for historic restoration projects. The Board's Financial Planning Committee has developed a plan to finance these projects through a combination of SHMA savings, new grants, and bank financing.

Please note the Auditor's report in this issue. The Board feels that our financial status is adequate at this time, but continued fund raising will be needed to manage future Association projects.

We will soon embark on a "membership drive" which I consider to be a very important and timely endeavor. Jan Lucas and Gidge Campbell have agreed to co-chair this major effort as we seek to canvas the entire community and surrounding area for new SHMA members. Jan and Gidge will be asking for your help to recruit friends and neighbors into SHMA membership.

Our director, Dr. Donald Yoder, has spruced up the museum and SHMA headquarters; for an old place, it is really taking on a new life! Watch for the "Grand Opening" April 21st from 3-5 p.m., when we can get together at the museum to enjoy the exhibits and officially welcome our new Director.

Please read the "classified" Help Wanted section of our March newsletter for volunteer jobs, and respond to our needs as you are able.

The SHMA Board meets monthly (2nd Thursday) at 7:00 p.m. in the community room at the new public library. Meetings are always open to the membership. Please do not hesitate to call Dr. Yoder at the SHMA office (584-4133) or any of the Board members (listed on page 2 of this issue) with your ideas, suggestions and donations of volunteer time. Join in for an exciting year and future!

*Doug Wing, President*



## Margaret Grigor—Sculptor and Medalist

Many people in Steilacoom knew that Margaret C. "Chris" Grigor, who lived for twenty-five years at 202 Martin Street, was an artist who designed medals and sculpted in a variety of styles and materials. Few, however, realized the extent of her fame. She was known nationally as the winner of numerous design contests for medals and as an artist whose work had been displayed in museum collections, one being the Smithsonian Institution Hall of Numismatics.

Born in Scotland, Grigor lived most of her life in the United States. A 1934 graduate of Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, she took her formal art training at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. 1939 was a banner year for the young sculptor, as she was awarded the Stimson prize for a life figure, won the William Emlen Cresson traveling fellowship, and also received her first professional commission for the Mount Holyoke Alumnae Medal.

World War II interrupted her career, and she joined the Women's Army Corps in 1942. From enlistee she rose to First Lieutenant, serving in San Antonio, Texas. There she met a fellow WAC, Eva Hudnell of Brooklyn, New York, discovering they were related as distant cousins and becoming good friends.

Taking up her career again, she settled in New York with her mother and her cousin. She worked there for ten years before the three women decided to move west for the mother's health. Mrs. Grigor expressed a desire to return to the Puget Sound country where she had lived on Fox Island. Her Scottish-born husband, the late William W. Grigor, an authority on furniture whose work took him across the country, once suffered a nervous breakdown. He and his family spent many months at Sylvan, Fox Island, during his convalescence. Margaret had fond memories of the Puget Sound area.

This brought the trio to Steilacoom. The house they selected was an artist's dream. At the time of the purchase, the house bore the name "Neenamoosa," an Indian name for "something very dear to the heart." They didn't want to change the name of an old house in an old town, so the sign remained. It is still there today, being retained by Dr. Tom McAvoy when he purchased the house in 1982 from the Grigor estate.

During the twenty-five years that the sculptor spent in Steilacoom, she designed over twenty medals for many distinguished groups. At the same time, she won recognition for her outstanding work in materials other than metal, including wood and stone.

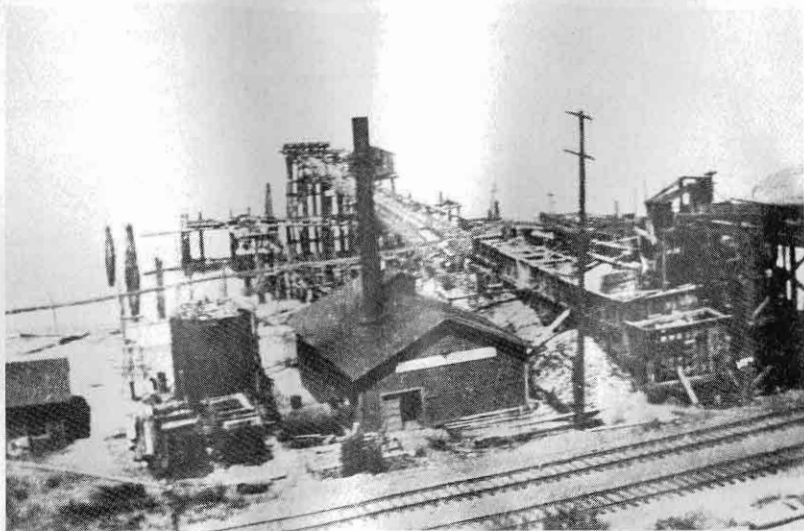
In 1968 the National Sculpture Society commemorated its 75th year by conducting a contest in medal design. The originator of the design that was picked for the reverse of the medal was Margaret Grigor. Grigor's entry shows the rugged hand of the established sculptor passing on to a young aspirant the lore and techniques of sculpture exemplified by the tools that are included in the design. In the background is a rough-dressed block of stone, ready to be worked into a new creation. This stands for all the sculpture that is to be done as long as man exists. Around the circumference of the medal are the words: "To Further the Sculptural Heritage."

Margaret Grigor had the basic need to create. She once said, "I sculpt so that I can hold my head up high. People don't have to like what I do, but they recognize me as a sculptor. That is what I am."

States in 1895. His wife Mary, two sons and two daughters remained in Cardiff, Wales, for two years waiting for Bill to secure a good job in this country. Times were hard in the late 1800s, and in 1897 he was hired by Mr. Ernie Sweigert to help build Fort Flagler on Marrowstone Island, Washington. (Congress had authorized the building of the Puget Sound defenses in 1896, and construction began at Marrowstone Point in July of 1897.)

Bill, now united with his family, took up residence in Hadlock, Washington. He was gravel foreman during the building of Fort Flagler. At this time, Bill became acquainted with a man named Barlow who furnished sand and gravel for cement used to build the fort at Marrowstone. This material came from the Pioneer Sand and Gravel Company not far from Steilacoom, Washington. After the fort was finished, Bill went to work for Pioneer. Pioneer gravel was considered by the government the finest in the country, and was made the standard quality for building roads.

Bill's family lived on the beach of Puget Sound, and not long afterward moved to the city of Tacoma. This gave the children a better opportunity to attend school. Around 1910, Bill decided to build a sand and gravel plant of his own in Steilacoom. Finances were loaned to him by a Mr. Martin. This plant would compete with Pioneer and would survive with its lower prices and overhead. Bill and his family took over an old house on top of the gravel pit (Madrona Park today). Bill's experience at Pioneer enabled him to construct this new plant. He patented a new type of suction box which separated the raw material being washed down from the upper reaches of the quarry. Steam pumps brought bay water to the pit hoses. From there, the sand and gravel washed down in the flumes to the bunkers and were separated for storage. Large rocks were piled up on one side, and usually the bunkers filled with sand before enough gravel was accumulated. Surplus sand was washed down to the beach, and this is what we now know as Sunnyside Beach. Eight men ran the entire operation. The payroll in 1925 consisted of Luckey, Andrews, Martin, Hiyuichi, Milausvich, Gavin, William, Jr., and Bill Thompson.

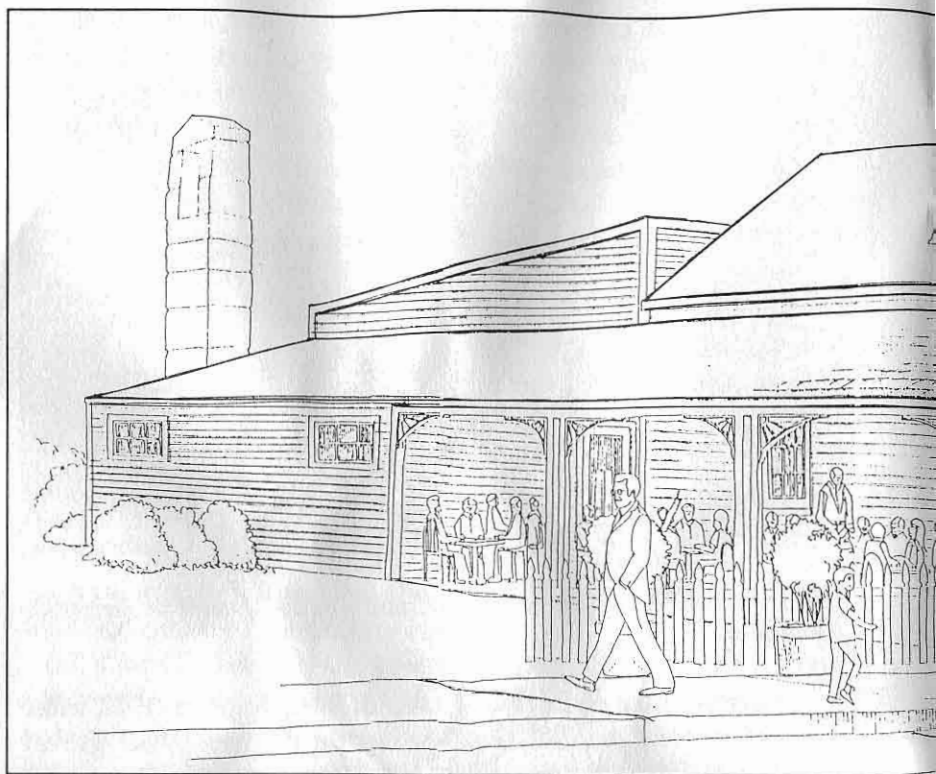


*Thompson's Steilacoom Sand and Gravel Co. was located at Sunnyside Beach in the 1920s.*

The family moved in to the town of Steilacoom in 1922, after the house on the hill was undermined from the gravel excavation. They purchased a house at 2014 Lafayette Street from Nick Doering. Bill planned to have the business continue with his son William, Jr. Unfortunately, his son died in 1929 at the age of 39. It was then decided to sell the plant and property to Pioneer Sand and Gravel Company, who tore it down. Economic depression in 1929 increased the value of money, and Bill and Mary lived comfortably the rest of their lives on Lafayette Street. Bill passed away in 1952 at the age of 92.

## Calendar of Events

- April 18** - "Literary and Cultural Images of Women As Reflected in Law," Dr. Marilyn Berger; 7:30 p.m., Ft. Steilacoom, Quarters 2.
- April 21** - Grand Re-opening of the museum; welcome to new Director Dr. Donald A. Yoder; Sunday, 3-5 p.m.
- May 23** - "Song Maker: An Encounter with a Poet," Anita Endrezze; 7:30 p.m., Steilacoom Tribal Center.



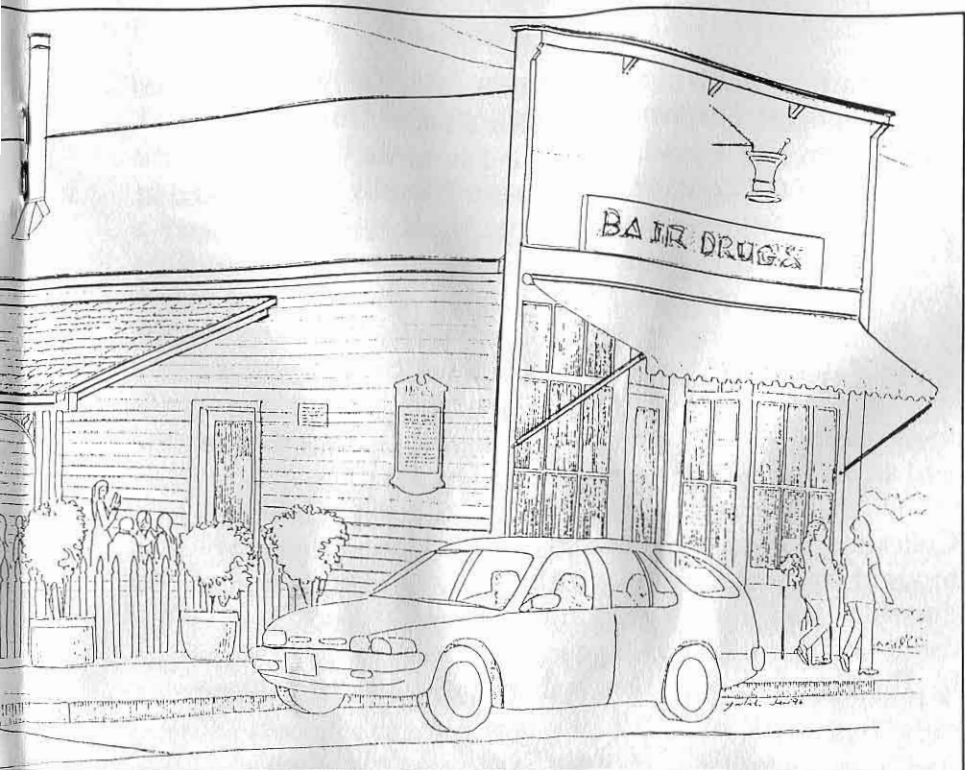
*Proposed Sketch - The Bair Drug and Hardware Store: The expanded kitchen and the outside door.*

## The Bair Drug and Hardware Store

**T**he Bair Drug and Hardware Store, the only existing commercial building of the previous century, will acquire a new addition in the next several months. Proposed plans call for an expanded kitchen, new restrooms, and a covered veranda. Gene Grulich, A.I.A., is in the process of completing the drawings.

The cramped and confined kitchen has always been a challenge to every lessee of the store. The expanded kitchen will greatly increase efficiency and productivity. With the new kitchen and the addition of the covered area, restaurant seating would be expanded—with increased revenue anticipated. The covered area would have multiple use potential in addition to dining during





*kitchen will be across the back of the building. The covered veranda will extend to . Attractive outdoor seating and landscaping will enhance the area.*

the warm summer months—museum/historic exhibits, cover for Apple Squeeze participants, facilities for private parties without closing the restaurant to the public, etc.

According to Director Don Yoder, "Responses to the membership survey conducted in conjunction with long-range plan development suggest general support for expanding SHMA activities, expanding some of our financial reserves, and especially preserving the Bair Store as a restaurant, museum, and gathering place."

After the drawings are completed by Mr. Grulich, they will be submitted to the Town of Steilacoom for approval. The project is expected to be finished during the summer.

## **"A Small Museum"**

After a two month closure for renovation, the museum opened March 1st—just in time for the tour season. Our new director, Don Yoder, had a goal. He wanted to make our space in the basement of the Town Hall "Museum Friendly." And he did it!

The overwhelming task was to bring some order and a system to the many parts of the museum. There were artifacts, books, publications, and donations all needing to be relocated. In two months the space was redesigned to better fit the purpose of the museum. The area for the library and the workshop are still "in process," but to step into the museum is to see a bright, welcoming display, a work area for the docents, and an invitation to explore "A Small Museum."

The shelves in the entry area are labeled "From Our Collection." These are artifacts that Don found in storage and brought out for us to enjoy. And there is more to come! The gift shop area is very attractive. The renovation shows what can be done with a small space and imagination. Please come by. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 1-4 p.m.

## **It's Time to Buy a Brick**

Don't miss the opportunity to buy a brick before Phase II is completed this spring in front of the Wagon Shop. Give a gift of a brick as a birthday present, a memorial, or as a way of continuing your family's name in Steilacoom. Bricks are \$50 to \$149. Send a check to SHMA, Box 88016, Steilacoom, WA 98388.

Phase Two for the brick patio/walkway in front of the Wagon Shop will be completed this spring. Because of the overwhelming success of the brick fund raiser for the reconstruction of the Wagon Shop, an additional base will be poured and the bricks laid soon. The Association is sorry for the delay in this matter.

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★ Twenty years ago, Spring, 1976: "The Bair Drug and Hardware project is progressing rapidly. Rest rooms and post office are largely completed. The soda fountain is in place, though not operational.

## A Letter to the Editor

*The following letter was recently received from Paul Rennord. If anyone has information on the boats mentioned by Paul, please contact the editors.*

Dear Editors,

Thanks for another interesting *Quarterly*. I always read them from cover to cover and usually find something with which I am familiar. I lived in Steilacoom from 1924 (First grade!) until about 1950 with time out for the U of W and WWII. From about 1933 to 1936 I was a part time clerk and delivery boy for Verbaum's Grocery, so I was familiar with many of the kitchens and ice boxes in town, as we sold ice then. From 1950 until 1960+ I made occasional visits, but by that time I had few close connections in the village.

The reason for this note, however, is to ask if the boat shown on page 10 could possibly have ended its career as Capt. Neil Henly's boat the *Iona* (if I remember the name correctly). The *Iona's* lines and cabin top curve come to mind almost exactly like the boat in the picture. When Capt. Henly had it anchored near the dock for many years, it had the cabin enclosed with windows with numerous small panes in each section. That made it unusual and different from most small boats, as the windows appeared to have been made for a house. They looked much like the storm windows which extended around the big porch on his old house on the east (maybe NE) corner of McNeil Island.

At lunch this Thursday I will ask Frank Larson if he believes my conjecture is reasonable. He was raised on the island and knew Capt. Henly as well. Capt. Henly was a neighbor of my family across Starling Street, and we kids often would have to lift his Model T out of the ditch along Union Avenue when he cut the corner too closely. Andy Bacon can verify that story.

Best wishes,  
Paul Rennord

## Steilacoom Dines Out—with Class

Fine dining was the popular pastime two evenings last month as Steilacoom Dined Out. The cuisine was varied enough to tempt every palate: Greek, Swedish, Shaker, Northwestern, Alsatian, and traditional seafood. Everyone who attended had an enjoyable time. All three goals of the original dinners held in 1992 were met—opportunity to meet new people, socialize with your friends, and raise money for the Orr properties. Nearly \$2,000 was netted.

The Orr Committee wishes to thank the following hosts and hostess for their hospitality and generosity for making this event so successful: Terry and Dave Cotant with chefs Lynne Daubenspeck and Adam Karlik; Janine and Rudy Davis, Wolf and Maria Fletter, and Judie and Jon Davis; Ann and Bob Edington assisted by Joan and Boyd Curtis; Jean and Herb Swanson and Sandy and Ed Strother; Jone and Jeff Borke, Pat Karman, and chef Corinne Poole; Rosa and Ken Kreger; and Sue and Bob LaFraugh. With a special thanks to those members who chose "A Quiet Evening at Home."

## Salmagundi

- ★ Recently Larry Wilkinson, assisted by Milt Davidson, surveyed the Bair Store property and adjacent lot as plans were prepared for the addition. Our thanks to Larry and Milt for their contributions of time and expertise.
- ★ Friday night dinners at the Bair Store continue to be popular. For an evening out on the town, make reservations and socialize with your neighbors. The store is also available for parties and catering. Call Rosa at 588-9668.
- ★ In 1925 the first gas station and garage was opened for business by Gordon Toole in the old Orr Wagon Shop.
- ★ An Historic Preservation Committee has been established by the Town. One of the objectives is to survey the historic structures and document their architectural styles. Rebecca Kermes, a member of the committee, will be photographing the homes, and may be asking homeowners questions about their homes.

STEILACOOM HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION  
 STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
 (Prepared on the Cash Basis)

For the Year Ended December 31, 1995  
 (With Comparative Totals for 1994)

			<u>1995</u>	<u>1994</u>
	<u>Unrestricted General Fund</u>	<u>Bair Store Fund</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Donations, Admissions	\$ 1,857	\$ --	\$ 1,857	\$ 3,616
Membership dues	2,450	--	2,450	2,740
Fund raising events	32,093	--	32,093	31,111
Interest, dividends	3,662	132	3,794	2,737
Unrealized gain on securities	40,169	--	40,169	2,074
Bair Drug Store rent	--	8,640	8,640	8,640
Grants	25,373	--	25,373	5,918
Miscellaneous income	<u>1,274</u>	<u>--</u>	<u>1,274</u>	<u>1,288</u>
Total revenue	<u>106,878</u>	<u>8,772</u>	<u>115,650</u>	<u>58,124</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Membership dues, expenses	\$ 407	\$ --	\$ 407	\$ 574
Professional	665	--	665	1,000
Repairs, maintenance	1,323	4,798	6,121	993
Fund raising events	19,553	--	19,553	17,891
Insurance	3,454	--	3,454	1,798
Taxes, licenses	1,804	885	2,689	3,746
Supplies	750	--	750	402
Salaries and related taxes	9,513	--	9,513	6,788
Postage, office	1,194	--	1,194	1,400
Printing	4,484	--	4,484	3,740
Interest	--	--	0	213
Utilities, telephone	3,062	99	3,161	2,659
Miscellaneous	<u>855</u>	<u>428</u>	<u>1,283</u>	<u>274</u>
Total expenses	<u>47,064</u>	<u>6,210</u>	<u>53,274</u>	<u>41,478</u>
Revenues over (under) expenses	\$ <u>59,814</u>	\$ <u>2,562</u>	<u>62,376</u>	<u>\$ 16,646</u>
NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR			<u>202,034</u>	<u>185,388</u>
NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR			<u>\$264,410</u>	<u>\$202,034</u>

STELLACOOM HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
(Prepared on the Cash Basis)

December 31, 1995 and 1994

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1994</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 65,423	\$ 45,111
Marketable equity securities	79,785	39,616
Office equipment	2,543	2,068
Store equipment	2,354	2,354
Real estate:		
Bair Drug Store	38,911	38,911
Orr Home	40,840	40,840
Wagon Shop	<u>35,554</u>	<u>35,554</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$265,410</u></b>	<b><u>\$204,454</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Lease obligation payable	\$ 0	\$ 1,420
Endowment obligation	<u>1,000</u>	<u>1,000</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>2,420</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted net assets	<u>264,410</u>	<u>202,034</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$265,410</u></b>	<b><u>\$204,454</u></b>

Net revenue from events and fund raising activities during the years ended December 31, 1995 and 1994 consist of the following:

Revenue	<u>1995</u>		<u>1994</u>	
	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Net Revenue</u>	<u>Net Revenue</u>	
Apple squeeze	\$16,957	\$10,130	\$ 6,827	\$ 5,137
Salmon bake	6,832	3,623	3,209	1,665
Annual dinner	2,685	2,786	( 101)	151
Museum stores	3,407	1,563	1,844	1,407
Other fund raisers	<u>2,212</u>	<u>1,451</u>	<u>761</u>	<u>4,860</u>
	<u>\$32,093</u>	<u>\$19,553</u>	<u>\$12,540</u>	<u>\$13,220</u>

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

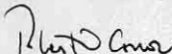
Board of Trustees  
STEILACOOM HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION  
Steilacoom, Washington

I have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association (a non-profit organization) as of December 31, 1995 and 1994, and the related statements of activities and functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Association's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on these statements based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. I believe that my audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.

These financial statements were prepared on the cash basis, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than generally accepted accounting principles.

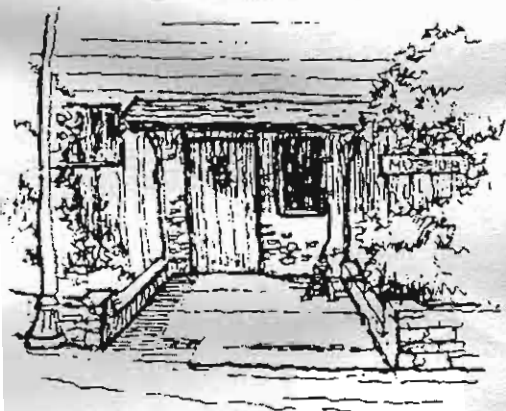
In my opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association as of December 31, 1995 and 1994, and the related statements of activities and functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended on the cash basis of accounting.

  
Robert O. Conor  
March 25, 1996

# Steilacoom Museum

## Grand Reopening

and Welcome to SHMA Director  
Dr. Donald A. Yoder



Sunday, April 21st, 3-5 p.m.  
Enjoy the New Exhibits - Refreshments



Steilacoom Historical  
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