



San Juan Historical Society & Museum

Fall 2015

The MHI is taking shape

The San Juan Island Museum of History and Industry (MHI) is a reality, with substantial development realized in the first half of this year.

The Lime & Logging exhibit wings are nearing the end of the construction (hammer & nails, that is) phase. Development of interpretive panels and video content for each wing will continue through the remainder of this year and into 2016.

It was through the generous financial assistance from Roche Harbor Resort (for lime) and The Honeywell Charitable Fund of The Community Foundation, (for logging,) which enabled us to make significant progress.

We thank all the individuals, contractors and suppliers for their financial donations and discounts/donations of time and materials towards the MHI. All the support is very much appreciated.



The logging wing features the evolution of saws used in logging: the two-man saw or "miserly whip," a drag saw and a collection of early chain saws from the 1950's.

The MHI has been open intermittently as work continues and is receiving glowing praise from visitors. Please visit and see the progress we have made. We invite your feedback and welcome your input.

Our funding needs continue; please consider a donation to the MHI today to help us continue to build this wonderful addition to your historical museum.

MHI Wish List

- Monetary donations
- Video monitors
- Recollections/family histories of working in one or more of the four industries: Fishing, Farming, Logging & Lime
- Historical photographs
- Relevant artifacts, especially lime barrels
- Volunteering your time & talents

See page 3, the MHI in pictures for more



The lime wing features an authentic quarry cart from Roche Harbor and replica lime kiln, made with bricks from the original kilns.

*Partial funding of the MHI has been made possible by grants from the Heritage Capital Project Fund administered by the Washington State Historical Society.

Student community projects

We want to recognize Friday Harbor High School students Fiona Sutherland, Eric Dunaway and Nash Nolan for choosing projects which were a benefit to the museum as part of their community class project.

Fiona and Eric helped add to our oral history collection. They interviewed ten long-time island residents to hear their stories of living on the island from more recent historical times: the 1960's and 1970's. They focused their questions on personal recollections of living here since that time and how the island has changed through the years. The ten subjects were: Lori Guard, Kevin Roth, Guard and Connie Sundstrom, David and Kris Brown, Rex and Lisa Guard, Janet Wilson, and Jeff Iverson. Fiona and Eric were grateful for the support they received and they learned quite a bit of more recent island history.

Nash Nolan worked with local artist Tom Brumm of Blue Rock Studio to develop and craft salmon for use in the fishing wing of the MHI. A CAD program was used to laser cut from steel, seven stylized salmon. The finished

products were then subjected to heat and pounding which changed the color and make them appear to be swimming. The finished products presently hang from the entrance to the fishing wing. More will be added to the ceiling inside the exhibit space, once development moves farther along.

Our thanks to Fiona, Eric and Nash for projects very well done!



Upcoming events

Roche Harbor Pioneer Cemetery Tour Saturday, October 17, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.

Roche Harbor's rustic pioneer cemetery, dating back to 1887, is the final resting place for over 27 of its lime works employees and their children. Its tranquil setting in the woods features white wrought iron and wood fences. Join local researcher and museum trustee, Robin Jacobson for a one-hour biographical tour with life stories of some of these permanent residents and where their families went next. Hear about Elisabeth the school teacher, Christof of the Volga Valley, little Mamie, and Mr. Yasuda. Meet at the cemetery entrance next to Roche Harbor Airport.

Friday Harbor Ghost Walk Saturday, October 31, 2015 at 1:00 p.m.

Whether one believes in ghosts or not, most people have a curiosity about people who lived in the past. In Friday Harbor, it's the people who lived and worked in some of the historic buildings. It is the buildings which can take us back into the history of our community. They invite us to hear their stories. Some of them are ghost stories and since it's Halloween, maybe one or two spirited guests will appear. Join local researcher and museum trustee, Robin Jacobson for this one-hour guided walk and hear about a little girl ghost and her dog, a poker game that never ends, a perfectly proper lady who saw a kindred spirit, and the sad tale of a teacher on trial for murder.

The MHI in pictures...



Clockwise from top left, the Atrium, the replica lime kiln, the developing sawmill, building the logging & lime exhibits, artist Peter Chan sketching out ideas on a field trip to Roche Harbor and the "Shake Shack" a display area in the logging exhibit which will display tools of the trade and video presentations, including the splitting of cedar shakes by hand.



The rabbits of San Juan Island

There was a time when local gardeners and farmers found themselves battling the wild rabbits for which San Juan Island was once famous for.

There were no know accounts of rabbits on the island at the turn of the 20th century. In 1903 several breeds were introduced, but in 1916 a rather severe winter killed a large number of them. In 1925 Howard Wilson and a Mr. Miller started a rabbit farm on Cady Mountain, with the rabbits raised in specially fenced fields. In 1934, the venture failed and about 3,000 rabbits were released. By 1970, it was estimated that there were close to a million bunnies roaming the island!

Rabbit hunting became popular with residents and visitors, for sport and for a food source. Shotguns and rifles were used, but the most successful hunters used old cars with spotlights and nets. The Oaks Resort advertised the rental of these “bunny wagons”

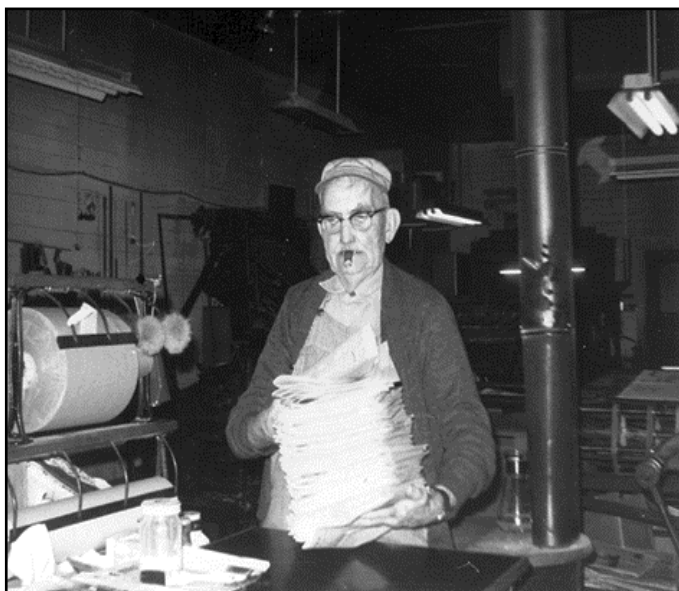


Bill Rosler's 1930 Chevrolet rabbit car, given to him at age 15.

for \$25 for 2 hours, or 50 rabbits, whichever came first. Around 1979 the rabbits began to vanish, for reasons unknown. Some blame introduced ferrets and fox, or some type of disease. While the number of rabbits on the island today is relatively low, their once abundant presence is not easily forgotten.

Journal History

Virgil Frits, (below) with his trademark cigar, carries freshly hand-folded Friday Harbor Journals. The story goes that Mr. Frits was skilled at folding the paper quicker and more accurately than anyone else.



Folding the newspaper was done by hand, well into the 1960's and was a job that local high school students were hired to do. For this, they earned \$2 a week and through the years it increased to \$5 a week plus a burger & fries from Vic's Drive-In.

All the pages of the newspaper were printed on one large unfolded sheet of newsprint which was sliced in half, then the halves were folded over a taut piece of string, then rotated, and folded again. Eventually, an electric folder was purchased as it was deemed more reliable and could speed up the folding process.

Fritz began his career with The Journal in 1907 at the age of 24 as the printer/editor. On September 15, 1959, he sold the newspaper for \$19,000 and a handshake to Bob and Mildred Hartzog, ending his legendary career after 52 years with the paper.

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Shelle, Ellis, Isla & Sky Cropper
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Blue Rock Studio
Williams Enterprises
Orcas Power & Light
Ross Remodeling

Thank you very much for your support!

**San Juan Historical
Society & Museum**

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The museum is a recipient of 2015 grant funding from San Juan County lodging tax funds. We thank the San Juan County Council and their lodging tax advisory committee for this grant award. We thank the islands lodging owners and their guests for their continued financial support of the museum. Proceeds derived from this grant help to defray operating expenses.

Please detach this form at dotted line and return with your donation. Thank you!

Name _____

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This is a (check one) ☐ Renewing Membership ☐ New Membership

Annual membership contribution: \$ _____ (amount of your choosing)

I wish to donate \$ _____ to the SJI Museum of History and Industry (MHI)

Please make payable to San Juan Historical Society, PO Box 441, Friday Harbor, WA 98250

The San Juan Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, tax i.d.# 23-7022221.