



San Juan Historical Society & Museum

Winter 2019

Save the date: Wednesday, March 20, 2019

***3rd Annual
Historical Society and Museum
Show and Tell Night***

7:00 p.m. at the San Juan Island Library Salon

**Stories, new discoveries, trivia and fun!
We promise that you will learn something new!**

**1st Annual Back to School Ice Cream Social was a success
When ice cream is involved, how could it not be!**

Ice Cream and toppings, music, fancy hats and costumes, oh my! Despite the rain last September, the sweet tooth set came to sample the star of the show...ice cream. With wonderful, delectable toppings from which to choose, what did a little rain matter? Watch for details on the 2nd Annual Ice Cream Social which we will host a wee bit earlier in August of 2019. Details forthcoming.



Fun was had by all with sweet tooth cravings satisfied. A very special thanks to Board Member and ice cream disher, Christine Minney at right.



MHI Updates

We are pleased to report that the farming exhibit wing is taking shape with interpretive content. The MHI committee has put in many hours this fall developing interpretive panels.

Several distinct elements of the island's agricultural heritage have been cultivated and detailed such as: hay and grains, sheep, fruit, poultry and eggs, dairy, peas, camas and woolly dogs, and homesteading. The Bellevue Poultry Farm at Roche Harbor and the James King Farm will receive blue ribbon recognition. Not to be forgotten will be an interpretation of the rabbit era on the island and their uneasy coexistence with local farmers.

Large panels, 3—6 ft. in size, will serve as introductions to the agricultural history of the island including a time line stretching from the geologic formation of the islands during the Devonian, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods (400—65 million years ago) up until today. Selective use of images, maps, graphs and text are applied throughout.

The final touches on the limestone processing wing will be completed next year. This area of the MHI has benefitted the most from visitor feedback as limestone processing is not familiar to most. We have used visitor response to help us refine this area, thereby providing a greater understanding of this once mighty island industry, especially to those who visit Roche Harbor Resort.

Additional funding is still needed to complete the development of the MHI. There are many ways to help such as custom engraved commemorative bricks, sponsorship of specific exhibit areas and more. Please consider a gift today or contact us for a personal tour to learn more.

We are grateful and appreciative to those who have provided funding for the MHI to date. Through your generosity, you have enabled us to develop a high quality exhibit area which has raised the stature of your Museum and provided a unique educational experience to those who tour the space. Thank you for making a difference!


Rabbits have made a lasting impact on the island, even being featured in a Sports Illustrated article in 1964. With about 3,000 released into the wild after a failed business venture in 1934 to an estimated one million in 1971 according to the Washington State Game Department. The population plummeted by 1979 for a variety of reasons. At one time, numerous businesses featured rabbits in their logos.

POULTRY AND EGGS

Most farmers had poultry as part of their farmsteads - a few dozen chickens and perhaps some geese and turkeys. However, during the late 1800s island farmers began to raise chickens for selling eggs and meat.

A few farms had large flocks and specialized in exotic breeds: John S. McMillin's Bellevue Poultry Farm near Roche Harbor raised Crystal White Orpingtons (first developed in England in 1886). In the 1930s, the islands reported over 35,000 chickens; apparently in 1936, 90% of these were on Shaw Island! In 1940, Shaw shipped out 3,400 cases of eggs.

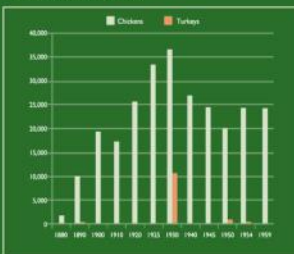
Turkeys also became an important crop in the 1930s, with some 15,000 birds counted in 1936. While turkey production proved ephemeral - there was a brief 'spike' in the 1950s - chicken numbers remained in the 20-25,000 range until the 1960s, when they began to fall off precipitously, mainly due to the rise in transportation costs.




A prize Crystal White Orpington, Bellevue Poultry Farm.

"The great quantity of eggs and poultry shipped from the islands embraced within San Juan County speaks volumes for the poultry industry, and yet this industry is only in its infancy."

J. H. Price
Annual Report, Washington State Bureau of Statistics & Agriculture, 1896



Bellevue Poultry Farm's White Pekin ducks.



Dressed poultry dishes, Bellevue Poultry Farm.


Poultry was a significant part of the agricultural economy of San Juan County in the 1930s with a reported 35,000 busy chickens. Shaw Island alone shipped 3,400 cases of eggs in one year which equaled around 500,000 eggs!

RABBITS, RABBITS, RABBITS...


THE INVASION OF THE RABBITS
Rabbits are not native to San Juan Island, so how did they end up here? They came when Harold Wilson and a "Mr. Miller" started a rabbit farm on Cady Mountain in 1925, with several domestic breeds from Seattle. Although they raised the rabbits in fenced fields for several years, they released about 3,000 animals in 1934 when their venture failed. Left to breed in the wild, the animals soon reverted to their ancestral type, the European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*). The rabbits thrived, so much so that they became a serious threat to island agriculture, eating crops and digging burrows in the fields. By 1971, the Washington State Game Department estimated that there were about one million rabbits on San Juan Island!

FARMERS FIGHT BACK!
The superabundance of rabbits took its toll on island agriculture and was a contributing factor in the decline of large-scale farming on the island. In 1978, the Agricultural Soil Conservation Service sent three semi loads of chicken wire to the island. The mesh fencing was attached to existing wires and posts and then folded to run along the ground on the outside of the fence line a foot or so, to prevent the rabbits from digging under.

POPULATION PLUNGE
Why are there relatively few of rabbits now, occupying small areas such as American Camp? While it is not definitively known what caused it, a big "die off" occurred around 1979. Some attribute this to a series of harsh, wet winters. Others claim the rise in predators, coupled with the loss of habitat (graze) through the fencing program. What we do know for sure is that history of rabbits on San Juan Island is not forgotten, at least in the memories of those who experienced those times.



All these rabbits filtered into the popular culture of the day. In 1964, Sports Illustrated featured an article on netting expeditions. Rabbits appeared locally in various guises: several restaurants and businesses featured rabbits in their logos.



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

How to donate to the San Juan Historical Society and Museum's Mission

Visit www.sjmmuseum.org website and click donate - choose the size of your gift.

Buy a Brick! Pave the way to the MHI. What a unique Christmas/Birthday/Anniversary gift for the person who thought they had everything!

Leave a legacy for the Historical Museum in your will.

Become a member of the Society, renew your membership, or become a business member (suggested individual membership is \$40, Business is \$100; however, you can put any amount you wish towards membership).

Become a volunteer - spend two hours a month or come by every day.

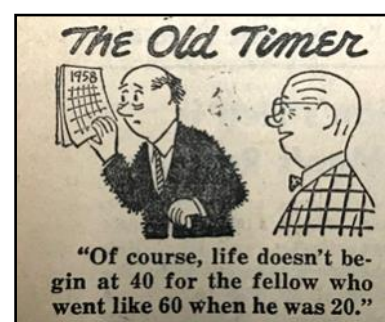
Donate an artifact (please check with us first).

Check out our wish list for urgent requests.

Whatever you do, it is so appreciated and will work towards the mission of the San Juan Historical Society and Museum. Thank you!

Moments in Time ...

- July 4, 1901 - Several families held a picnic at the area previously owned by the Eureka Mine Company. According to the San Juan Islander newspaper, the "day was celebrated in a manner befitting a free and enlightened people."
- February 6, 1958 - Sheriff deputies and the Coast Guard launch a search for tourist who had gone hiking with friends. The search was called off at 11p.m., but resumed early the next day when the young lady was found on the beach. She had been lost all night...on Brown Island.
- January 25, 1962 - Ella Dightman reported that the Monkey Puzzle Tree that was at her home on West Street had been uprooted by the recent high winds. The tree had originally been planted by the Frits family in 1912, and had grown to 12" in diameter.
- March 11, 1968 - Washington State Ferries announce the launch of the new super ferries: Hyak, Kaleetan, Yakima, and Elwha. All four are still in service 50 years later.
- August 15, 1982 - 16 Model T Fords from the Willamette Valley Oregon Model T Club were driven by their owners to visit San Juan Island.
- April 12, 1987 - A Friday Harbor man woke up neighbors at 1:30 a.m. by using a shotgun to shoot at a wasp nest outside his home. The man attempted to exact revenge when he was stung by a wasp upon entering his home. The man surrendered to deputies and was charged with aiming and discharging a firearm where it could possibly harm another human. The man apologized to neighbors and admitted he should not have fired the gun so late. He further offered, "it's not fun getting stung by one of those boys in the middle of the night."



A new sign points the way

Ask and you shall receive. That is how it worked out with the addition of a new sign given to the Museum by the Town of Friday Harbor.

The location of the Museum is slightly off the beaten path and at times difficult for potential visitors to know where we are located.

Conveniently located on the corner of Spring and Price St., about half a block away, the new sign (at right) has made an immediate impact in guiding visitors our way.



Our thanks to the Friday Harbor Town Council, Mayor Farhad Ghatan and Town staff.

Jail exhibit update


The exhibit renovation of the San Juan County Jail has provided a much needed update to the space. Task force members Robin Jacobson, Jenn Rigg, Mo Sloane, Andy Zall, Diana Mancel and Kevin Loftus have researched historical content, designed and procured new interpretive panels for the building. The empty cells and anteroom have been repurposed and feature details about the jail and courthouse, smuggling, crime and punishment, and local law enforcement history.

We will continue adding content and if you have stories, artifacts, or photos you would like to include, please let us know. We are lacking images of the jail building when it was near the courthouse, photos of previous law enforcement personnel, judges and prosecuting attorneys. We also seek jail experiences, prisoner stories, etc. The purpose of the exhibit is to highlight the critical role the jail building and the local law enforcement played in the culture and peacekeeping on the Island. In addition, the San

Juan County Sheriff's Office is furnishing relevant artifacts.

Funding is provided in part by the San Juan County Council Historic Preservation Grant Program. We thank the Council for making these funds available for historic preservation.

SAN JUAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE




Friday Harbor was chosen as the county seat when San Juan County was established in 1873. Until 1906 the affairs of the new county were conducted in various wood frame buildings, the first, a 16' x 24' shack which served as the courthouse and the home of Ed Warbass, the county's first auditor; the second, a two-story wood-frame building at the southeast corner of Spring and First streets.


In 1906 the county commissioners approved plans for a new building, one that would "assume graceful proportions" and to be "in keeping with the dignity and growing importance of San Juan County." Seattle architect, William P. White, designed the building; the estimated cost was \$12,000, the actual cost was \$14,000. Construction was awarded to J. S. Shockey of Bellingham with a deadline of October 15, 1906 for move-in. The cornerstone made of Roche Harbor limestone, was laid on June 29, 1906 by former Sheriff Stephen V. Boyce.

There were structural issues early on: a collapsed roof during construction, due to removing structural supports before the concrete hardened and six months later, foundation settling. Completion was January 12, 1907, and the construction company had to pay \$10 per day for missing the deadline. By Valentine's Day 1907, officials moved in and within weeks part of a floor collapsed during a county commissioners meeting. Early on, it was evident that the lack of central heating made some of the larger rooms uninhabitable during colder months.

In the 1980s, the adequacy and safety of the building again came into question and the building was vacated. In 1984, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places, while locally the community debated over whether to save or demolish it. A special advisory ballot passed by the voters finally tipped the scales toward restoration. In 2006 the stately and historic building celebrated 100 years of government service which continues to this day.



The second San Juan County Courthouse, established in 1883, signaled that Friday Harbor was a legitimate county seat. It prospered for five years before the need to erect a grander structure. After the current (1906) county courthouse was opened, it was moved to the current site of the Little Store at Spring and Apple streets and converted into a hospital.



The major local event in 1906 was construction of the new San Juan County Courthouse at Second and Court streets. On June 29 the cornerstone is laid as residents look on.

"They're a speedy bunch of citizens, those people. And they try their lawsuits with dispatch and return to their farms without stopping to argue over points of law of lesser magnitude because they don't have time to argue. Boat schedules among the islands constitute an articulating influence. They come from far and near, and they know when they are going to arrive, and when they are going to leave and that settles it. Court cases are tried and disposed of between boats and you'd be surprised how simplified court work has become in San Juan County. Some of the angriest court contests I have ever witnessed have been settled between boats at Friday Harbor, where attorneys and witnesses watch their time pieces and keep an ear tuned for a 'toot toot' from the docks."

Superior Court Judge Edwin Gruber
Friday Harbor Journal, September 25, 1938

At left, a much reduced image of the panel that provides a brief historical overview of the county courthouses. It features images and quotes from the collection.

How to volunteer, you ask?

The Museum is committed to our volunteers. There is a volunteer coordinator, several volunteers who can serve as mentors, many projects to choose from (we base your assignments on what you want to do), supplies necessary to work, comfortable surroundings, and an atmosphere of learning, discovery, and fun.

- ✓ Set up an appointment with the volunteer coordinator
- ✓ Check the box on the return form in this newsletter and send it to us
- ✓ Think about your favorite occupations and hobbies
- ✓ Decide about your own time and physical restrictions
- ✓ Join the fun

The volunteer coordinator is Diana Mancel, who is also the Board Vice President. You can contact her at: volunteer@sjmuseum.org with "museum volunteer" in the subject line, call the museum at 360-378-3949, or by stopping by during regular business office hours (Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. -2 p.m.).

What sort of projects can I volunteer for?

We have something for everyone: working with computers or without them, landscaping, researching, outreach, making presentations, fundraising. To assist you in your quest, here are just a few of the projects in detail.

Photo Task Force: There are several opportunities in this project, including scanning photos (we will train you), sorting unidentified photos, preserving photos for the archives, copying photos for insertion into family collections, working with families in identifying their collections.

Upgrading Exhibits: A number of the exhibits in need updating and refreshing. This requires research, maintenance, exhibit design research, outreach to the community and organizations for additional information and donations, or just keeping the areas presentable.

Family Collections: Vital information for researchers and genealogists, therefore an important source of revenue for the museum. A basic file of family histories and artifacts has been set up, but there is much to do on every one of the 50+ files we have. Sorting out the files and checking available family trees, ascertaining if any of the family remains on the Island, if there are any photos in the file that need to be scanned, and what the file needs to fill in all the blanks. A volunteer could step in at any point of this process and provide valuable assistance towards getting these files in shape.

We will work with you to provide the type of projects that interest you and which you will enjoy. We are flexible with whatever time schedule you have to give and will provide training and project overview.

A NEW STORE **The Phoenix Bargain Store**

Calls the attention of the citizens of Friday Harbor and Vicinity to our varied stock of Notions, Crockery Glassware, Chinaware, Etc. all of which we sell at reasonable rates. Come in and be convinced that our Prices are Right. We also carry Bread, Cake, Fresh Fruits, Candies, Ice Cream, Etc.

Friday Harbor



We sell all other Chevrolet Trucks have delivered 40,000 Chevrolet Trucks in an average of 1200 a day - in a single month!

There's no other dealer, anywhere, that has so many Chevrolet trucks on hand. It tells you that Chevrolet trucks are first in your preference because they're built to last. It tells you that Chevrolet trucks are the perfect solution to all kinds of needs for all kinds of loads. It tells you that Chevrolet trucks will load your goods more miles, at less cost per mile. Come in and get all the money-saving facts!

CHEVROLET

ADVANCE-DESIGN TRUCKS
SAN JUAN MOTOR COMPANY
Friday Harbor, Wash. Phone 570

Ads from long ago as featured in the Friday Harbor Journal, clockwise from 1910 to 1951.

— Eat at —
STONEY'S COFFEE SHOP
The
Home of
Better Eats
— Friday Harbor —

“Make Hay”

while the sun shines, is an old maxim. It is just as applicable to saving during the summer employment season. Now is the opportunity to provide for next winter. Better start a savings account.

THE SAN JUAN COUNTY BANK

FOR QUALITY AND SERVICE DEMAND **--- DARIGOLD ---**

ICE CREAM	BUTTER
MILK	CREAM
BUTTERMILK	COTTAGE CHEESE
CHEDDAR CHEESE	PROCESS CHEESE
BLUE CHEESE	

Imported Products Don't Build Your County
SAN JUAN COUNTY DAIRYMEN'S ASSOCIATION
PHONES 560 and 563 --- Friday Harbor

Save those memories...

Holiday season is the time for families to meet up and share stories from the past - this year, record some of those for your family history! Mark 2019 as the year you will begin to collect those tales that begin with “my mother would never have let me dress like that”, or “my great-grandfather was in the Civil War” - these are priceless stories and when your elders are gone, so are these treasured links to your family story. Here are some ideas:

- On a large poster board, sketch out a family tree (you can Google for some samples) and bring it with you to the family gathering (or create a personal website and give your family access). Start filling in the blanks.
- Ask around your family for who belongs to any of the family tree sites (ancestry.com, familytree.com, etc.) and ask them to bring some printouts of their genealogy search.
- Give DNA kits to your relatives 3 or 4 weeks in advance of the family gathering and share the results.
- Ask questions at your family gathering, i.e.: Did any of our ancestors do anything famous? Anything infamous? Are there any mysteries to be solved in our past? Does anyone have any old photos? Start this process in 2019, and by Thanksgiving you will have LOTS to talk about at the table; this search for your ancestors tells you much about yourself.

Introducing “Ranger”

Our robotic lawnmower family has grown. We reported to you last summer of the addition of Chopper (or the iMow) our robotic lawn mower, generously provided to us by an anonymous donor. We were not only the first on our block to have such a technological marvel, we were the first on the island! The results have been impressive to say the least. The grounds have never looked better and elicited so much curiosity.

Chopper now has a co-worker. Having arrived in November, from Chopper’s own anonymous donor, is Ranger. Ranger and Chopper assume joint responsibility for keeping the Museum lawn neat and trim. Although they may see each other in passing, they have designated areas of mowing. Chopper recently received required maintenance, including a software update (!) and new eyeballs to match Ranger’s more dignified appearance. With an acre and a half of grounds to tend, this new dynamic duo have ensured that our lawn always looks great.

Thanks to our anonymous donor and to Darrin Sheffer and the great folks at Harbor Rental and Saw Shop (Museum business members by the way) for providing the iMows to us and for keeping them operating at peak efficiency.



The dynamic duo of Chopper (left) and Ranger (right) recharge their batteries after a mowing shift. They are whisper quiet and have become attractions in their own right.



New and Renewing Members and Donations

Since last newsletter publication 9.1.2018

2018—2019

Business Members

Thompson & Associates, CPA's
Kings Market
San Juan Interiors
Islanders Insurance
Friday Harbor Suites
M&W Auto Sales & Rentals
God's Pocket Photography
Barnyard Farm Supply/
Horshu Ranch
Benedict Restoration & Repair
Store More Storage
Harbor Lands, LP
R&R Accounting
Ernie's Cafe
Homestead Mobile Home Park
Harbor Rental & Saw Shop
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 Elyse Scotlynn (Scottie) Paul
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 Jim & Jackie Huesman
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 Mary Jo Bolte
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Memorial donations

Bob Nichols
 Vonnie Nichols

Arthur and Laura Wotton
 Sharon Wotton Johnson

Stan and Pinkie Rouleau
 Janis and Don Crosby

Patricia, John and William Loftus
 Kevin Loftus

MHI Contributors

Rich Komen
 Barbara & Frank Fagan
 Laura & Thomas Little
 Kathy & Roger Paul

Cheryl Nelson
 Colleen & Ron Nelson
 Abbie & Craig Nelson
 Elyse Scotlynn (Scottie) Paul

Laura (Hailey) Henderson-Paul
 Harper Marie Paul
 Ed, Barbara, Meghan & Jeff Adams

Wish list

- *Volunteers for: greeting visitors, research, data input, grounds maintenance and exhibit design.*
- *500 brick pavers (to complete the current grounds traffic flow)*
- *Donation of membership to Newspapers.com*
- *Donation of membership to Genealogybank.com*
- *Any copy, in any shape, of the first county newspaper, "The Island Graphic"*
- *Sturdy office chairs (need 5)*
- *Office desk compatible for a computer workstation*
- *Sturdy tables (for exhibit work)*
- *12' step ladder*
- *It bears repeating: VOLUNTEERS!*

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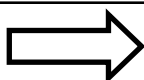
Staff

Kevin Loftus,
Executive Director

Address service requested

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
P A I D
Friday Harbor
WA 98250
PERMIT NO. 18

*Check mailing label for
membership renewal date.
A handy envelope has
been provided for your
convenience.*



The Museum is a recipient of grant funding from San Juan County lodging tax funds. Proceeds derived from this grant help to defray a portion of operating expenses. 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 the continued financial support of the Museum.

☐ **Please contact me for volunteer opportunities.**

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

This is a (check one) ☐ Renewing Membership ☐ New Membership ☐ Year end Donation

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

Additional contribution: \$ _____

Memorial contribution: \$ _____ in memory of _____

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

Please make checks 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