



San Juan Historical Society & Museum

Spring 2018

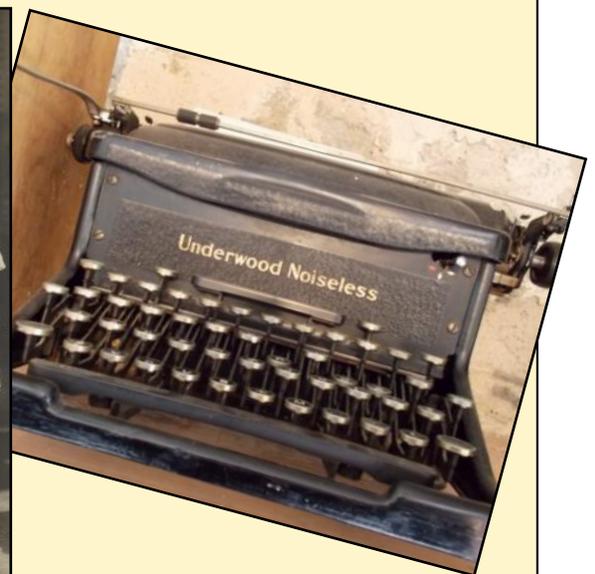
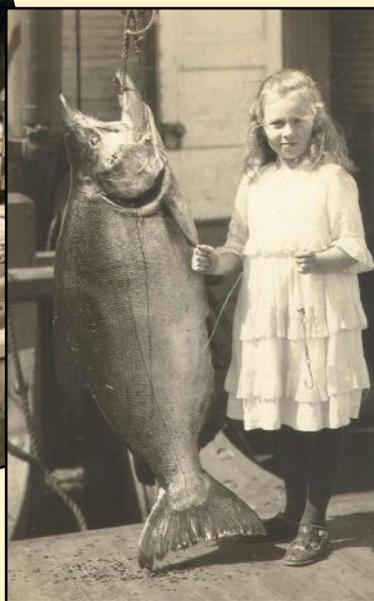


Annual meeting and Show and Tell Night

*Wednesday, March 14
at the San Juan Island Library*

**Annual meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.
Show and Tell presentation begins at 7:00 p.m.**

Please join us for our annual meeting and election of the Board of Trustees for the coming year. We will be hauling out some seldom-seen artifacts, evocative photographs and delightful trivia which are sure to wow and entertain! Hear from some of our volunteers about the projects they are working on to further document and educate us about our history right here on San Juan Island. Learn about what is happening at your Historical Museum and more! Please join us, you'll be glad you did. Refreshments courtesy of the Friends of the Library.



From the Director

Spring is just around the corner and we have a lot in store for the coming months. While we have fewer visitors in the winter months it is usually our busiest time for working on projects and charting new courses for the Museum.

This winter we have continued to develop exhibit plans for the Museum of History and Industry (MHI), and volunteer Mo Sloan has spent extensive time developing a comprehensive landscape plan for the grounds. The plan will improve the visual appeal of the grounds and add several enhancements, over the next few years.

With the rise in popularity of genealogy, we are fielding an increasing number of research queries. Many of these queries turn into visits to the island by descendants of former residents, in order for them to look through our archives and visit the places where their forebears lived and worked. We are most fortunate to be able to provide the resources in helping those wanting to connect to their past.

It is through the generous financial support of you, our members and supporters, who make it possible for us to do the work we do. We are greatly indebted to you for investing in the Historical Museum.

We ask for your ongoing financial support by renewing your membership or by making a discretionary contribution today. A donation in any amount would be appreciated and there are other ways in which you can help. Increasing your membership contribution, giving a gift membership or memorial donation, or sponsoring a part of the Museum of History and Industry, are examples of how you can make a meaningful contribution to our efforts.

You can be assured that whatever you can do to help will be greatly appreciated. But best of all, 100% of your donation will go the benefit the Museum and keep it operating at a high level to preserve the history of San Juan Island. *With gratitude, Kevin Loftus, Executive Director.*

From the collection



This is a framed piece of folk art, is known in the antique trade as a “sailor woolie”. The only information attached to the frame, when it was examined during our 2017 Archival Project at the Museum, was a piece of cardboard affixed to the frame, stating that the object had been found “under the Cattle Point Lighthouse”.

We doubt that was the case and we really have no verification or other provenance concerning it.

Initial research reveals that “woolies” were created by British and American sailors to pass time between chores, or as memorabilia once the men had retired from their seafaring lives. Similar woolies have fetched high dollar amounts from avid collectors in recent years.

The “woolie” in the Museum’s collection portrays a large sailing ship, a gaff-headed schooner with sails set. There is a large American flag and a large British flag, constructed out of wool string. Unfortunately, the piece has been glued to the backside during a framing process, but is still quite striking. We are tentatively setting a c. 1875 date to the piece and an assumption that it represents the Pig War. As soon as funds are available, we will acquire a more formal and professional appraisal.

WWII airplane spotters on San Juan Island

The following is an excerpt written by the late Tony Surina (1927-2004) who documented a wealth of San Juan Island history from a personal perspective. He penned this recollection in 2003.

I was an airplane spotter during the early years of World War II. My shift was from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. every other Sunday. My partner was Jack Geoghegan, who at that time had the only real estate office in Friday Harbor. Most shifts were manned by two people. Our airplane observation post was located on the hill to the left of the present Friday Harbor water tank. Our duty was to report planes that we either saw or heard on a flash message form that we called in to an Army Information Center. The form below explains what was reported to an Army Information Center.

The following are memories of two other airplane spotters: The plane spotting lookout at Roche Harbor was probably a little unique compared to the others in the area. Our lookout was the pilot house from the old, sturdy and hardworking tugboat the Roche Harbor whose old hulk sat on the beach for years. We had mainly four types of planes we had to watch for. The area between Henry Island and Roche Harbor was an area we had to watch carefully as planes could duck lower at that point of land. We then called directly to Bellingham to report any sightings.

- Betty Felton Ramey



I drove the route to the South End (Cattle Point) observation post for about one and a half years, in 24 hour shifts. We had a change in personnel manning the post every three hours. That required me picking up someone at their home, taking them to the post, then picking up whoever was on watch and taking them to their home.

I started by standing watches at the observation post at the water tank in Friday Harbor. Then my dad bought me a Model A Ford. We received gas stamps and had a gas tank at the farm so I got the job driving the watch standers to and from their job.

I do remember Bill Jones, who lived at the top of Bailer Hill, was a frequent passenger because there were many who hired him to take their watch. He and I had some interesting times with going into a ditch one night when I fell asleep. He helped me push the car out of the ditch and away we went. I knew that route to the South End like the back of my hand. Boy, the rabbits on the road back then were something else.

Those who stood watch would look out for airplanes or anything different on the water off the South End. They had charts of different airplanes on the wall of the post so that they could identify types of planes. There was a telephone there so that they could inform the appropriate agencies as to what they saw or heard. Not very exciting jobs really, but we all took our jobs seriously.

- Sonya Arend Flaherty—current museum member

FLASH MESSAGE FORM

Call your telephone central and say: "ARMY FLASH 91"
(Give your phone number)
 Central will connect you with an Army Information Center.
 When you hear: "ARMY, GO AHEAD PLEASE", you say: "FLASH" 1942
 and continue message you have checked on form below, in the order indicated:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
NUMBER OF AIRPLANES	TYPE OF AIRPLANES	ALTITUDE OF AIRPLANES	WERE AIRPLANES SEEN OR HEARD?	YOUR OBSERVATION POST CODR NAME	DIRECTION OF AIRPLANES FROM O. P.	DISTANCE OF AIRPLANES FROM O. P.	AIRPLANES HEADED TOWARD
(Number)	SINGLE-MOTOR	VERY LOW	SEEN HEARD	<i>Arca</i> 26	NW N NE	(Miles)	NW N NE
FEW	BIMOTOR	LOW			W R		W E
MANY	MULTI-MOTOR	HIGH			SW S SE		SW S SE
If airplanes were directly over O. P. cover columns 5 and 6 by squaring "OVERHEAD"						Omit if it will cause delay in report.	

RFB-7-2-40-1,000,000

Observation post in Friday Harbor (at left) and a Flash Message Form (above) used by spotters during their shifts. Both date from 1942.

The depth of the collection

So much more than barns and cooking utensils....

Although best known for its preserved buildings and everyday objects used by early settlers, the Museum also offers a rich variety of resources for individuals engaged in both personal and professional genealogical and historical research. Books; files of clippings, notes, letters, documents, and reports; local newspapers and other published materials; journals, photos, scrapbooks; and oral histories are all part of the Museum's collection.

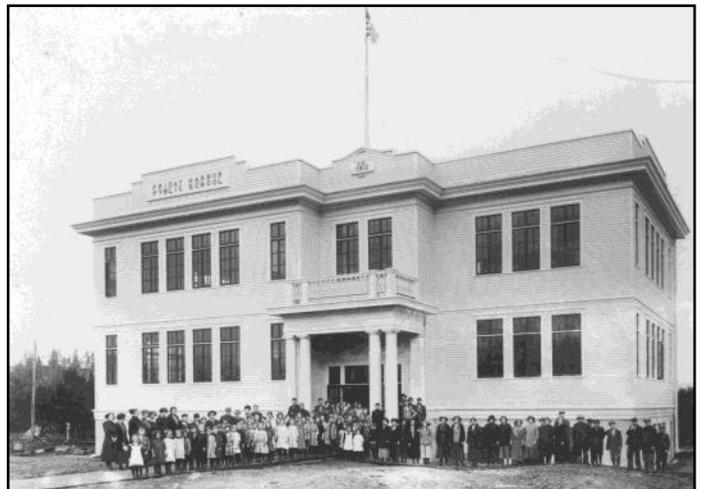
In one typical instance recently, a local researcher sought information on the early history of education on San Juan Island. At the museum, with the help of staff and volunteers, she was able to find newspaper articles, photos of the earliest island schools and students, files of clippings and reminiscences, and old textbooks.

One resource revealed, for example, that the first school on the island in the early 1860s initially operated only in the summer. Only when primitive roads and trails were dry enough that students coming as far as four miles from home could climb the steep incline to the one-room schoolhouse on Portland Fair Hill at the south end of the island. Another document recorded that as late as 1907, the Friday Harbor School had one teacher for the 61 students in grades one through three in a single classroom.

The research was summarized in an essay, "Educating Pioneer Children on San Juan Island," for *HistoryLink, the Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History* (<http://www.historylink.org/File/20501>).

It includes, at the end, a list of sources used in the study, almost all of which were found in the Museum archives.

If you have an interest in researching a particular part of island history, please let us know. We are here to help.



This image of the second consolidated Friday Harbor School on opening day, 1912. The location of this school was in the vicinity of where the San Juan Community Theatre is located today. The round posts in front live on in front of Friday Harbor Drug on Spring Street.

Things you need to know

Notes gleaned from vintage newspapers, family scrapbooks, and historic records in the collection:

- *Dr. Malcolm Heath provided medical services to more than 170 of the San Juan Islands from 1950 until his retirement in 1980. His previous experience was as an Army Doctor/Paratrooper/Glider Pilot during WWII – just a note, 1,624 gliders were towed over Germany during that war, and only 76 survived.*
- *San Juan Island's Cannery's first season, 1895, produced 18,000 cases of sockeye salmon.*
- *During the Great Depression of the 30's, an FDR program allowed the local blacksmith, Mr. May, to teach blacksmithing to the local San Juan Island boys.*
- *In 1955, San Juan Island was the home to the National Champion of the Springer Spaniel Field Trials: San Juan Sam.*

Keeping up with the times

Besides this newsletter there are several ways in which we are reporting what is happening at the Museum and sharing different parts of the collection with the community and beyond. For the last few years we have run a monthly column online in the San Juan Update. These short tidbits of island history often bring about obscure stories and have proven to be a popular segment. Board President Robin Jacobson and volunteer Shaun Hubbard have done fine work in researching these stories. You can access them from our website sjmuseum.org, under Community Outreach and click on History Columns. A thanks to Tim Dustrude of the San Juan Update (sanjuanupdate.com) for this partnership.

Starting in March we begin a new monthly column in the Journal of the San Juan's, which will be titled Island History Memories. The column will feature content relating to island history in different formats ranging from historic time lines to regular articles. The first column is about the history of the Historical Museum. We could not think of a better way to start off.

If you access social media, please like our Facebook page, San Juan Historical Society and Museum. We enjoy making images from the archives available and especially the comments they often elicit. We learn a lot about certain images, which helps to provide more detail. As of this writing we are closing in on 800 likes. Help to put us over the top by liking us today!



Our February San Juan Update column celebrated Going Happily to the Dogs with a salute to “man’s best friend.” These men and their dogs are unidentified.

Can you spare some time?

A plethora of volunteer opportunities abound! If you only have two hours to offer a week, we can make good use of your valuable time. We have numerous needs and will show you everything you need to know. We are sure we can offer something that suites your fancy, such as:

- *Research assistance.*
- *Cataloging records.*
- *Data input.*
- *Greeting our visitors from around the world and sharing our fascinating history as well as where they can find the best cheeseburger and fries on the island. (We get those kinds of questions often.)*
- *Weeding flower beds.*
- *Organizing.*
- *Fundraising.*
- *Helping to develop and stage new exhibits.*
- *Lawn mowing. Rich doesn’t mind sharing!*
- *Writing newsletter articles just like this.*
- *...and much more, just ask!*



Volunteer Rich Norris keeps the lawn in fantastic shape with military precision. As a former Navy man you might expect that. While not mowing the lawn, Rich quietly fills many other roles here at the Museum. From always at the ready to lend a helping hand—including prepping this newsletter for mailing—to facilitating Board of Trustee retreats, Rich is a great guy to have around. Thank you Rich for all you do. Ride on!

Remembering Kitty Wade Roberts



Upon retiring from the Friday Harbor School District in 1996, she devoted more of her time volunteering and did so until a few months before her passing.

In the image at left, she is shown standing next to an original island telephone switchboard which is a part of the Museum collection. She worked at the switchboard as a young adult, when it was located in the Bayview/San Juan Hotel lobby, which today is a Windermere Real Estate office.

We lost a dear member of our Museum family on Christmas Day, Kitty Roberts. Kitty was a long-time docent, board member and dedicated volunteer for over 25 years.

Kitty's island heritage goes back four generations on her mother's side of the family. Her great grandparents were early island settlers, Lucinda and Steven Boyce who arrived on the island in 1860. Lucinda was a midwife and Stephen was the county's first sheriff. Kitty naturally had a profound interest in the history of the island.

She was born and raised on San Juan Island. Her family lived on the edge of San Juan Valley, on Little Road until she was 6 years old. Her family then moved into Friday Harbor when her father, Leith Wade became foreman and eventually President of the Friday Harbor Packing Company.

She married her childhood sweetheart Kip Roberts and together they spent several years away from the island, while Kip served in the U.S. Air Force. They returned home to the island for good in 1960 and raised their four children. Over the years, grandchildren and great-grandchildren followed extending the family line.

Kitty became involved with the Museum in the early 1990's when her mother, Beryl Boyce Wade, donated her time as a docent. She thought it was a marvelous way to greet local residents and meet new ones from all over the world and share her love and knowledge of island history.

She would chuckle about the times people would call in and ask her to walk next door to Herb's Tavern and inquire if a particular individual was there. The responses often given were: "who wants to know?" "no" or "tell them he just left." She worked overnight shifts and a cot was provided so she could catch a little shut-eye. Nights were usually quiet, but on a few occasions she had to ring every line asking residents to come and help fight fires in town. Back then, residents were counted on to pitch in and help.

We are most thankful that Kitty provided so much to the Museum for the many years that she did. She is, and will always be missed. She was a true island treasure.



We could always count on Kitty to help at the Old-Fashioned Christmas parties. Whether serving up baked goodies, making sure the hot apple cider was in great supply and helping with decorations, she ensured everyone had an enjoyable time and was well fed.

New and Renewing Members and Donations

Since last newsletter publication 12.1.2017

Many thanks for your support and generosity!

**Current
Business Members**

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San Juan Interiors
Islanders Insurance
Friday Harbor Suites
M&W Auto Sales & Rentals
God's Pocket Photography
Barnyard Farm Supply/
Horshu Ranch
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**Kendo Yasuda
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Jack McMurray
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MHI Contributors

Jane & David Cable
Barbara Adams
Jim & Jackie Huesman
Judith Wotton Sgro

Claudia Mills
Carolyn Haugen
Kevin Loftus
Anonymous



Correction from last newsletter: We neglected to state that this Fosston No. 24 fanning mill was donated by John and Helen King to the Museum. It will be used in the farming exhibit wing of the MHI. We apologize for the oversight.

**San Juan Historical
Society & Museum**

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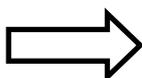
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The Museum is a recipient of grant funding from San Juan County lodging tax funds. Proceeds derived from this grant help to defray a portion of operating expenses. We thank the San Juan County Council and their lodging tax advisory committee for this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

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

Name _____

Address _____

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Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

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

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

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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, tax i.d.# 23-7022221.