



Mukilteo's Dynamite had "A Kick in Every Stick"!

Many of us remember well what we were doing on September 11, 2001, or the day Neil Armstrong stepped on to the moon, or when JFK was assassinated, or other times when all thoughts became focused on a sudden and dramatic event.

The old-timers of Mukilteo have their own day that remains forever etched in their minds: September 17, 1930, the day the gunpowder plant exploded. When MHS asks each year for its Pioneer of the Year to share memories of growing up in old Mukilteo, inevitably the gunpowder explosion comes tumbling out as fresh in their minds as it was nearly nine decades ago.

Recently new artifacts produced just before the explosion of the gunpowder plant were added to the MHS collection, thanks to Frauna and Erv Høglund who contributed, among other items, three leaflets produced by the Puget Sound & Alaska Powder Company.

MHS is delighted to receive the company's publications that were produced in April, June, and July of 1930, and that include the company's logo and some photos as well as jokes, puzzles, and other examples of the advertising of the era.

One of the leaflet photos shows the fleet of trucks that delivers the explosives to the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.



Some of the trucks that delivered millions of pounds of Vulcan dynamite throughout the Northwest.

Another leaflet photo shows the men who worked at the Powder Mill with the caption, "These are the boys who make the Vulcan "KICK in every STICK" explosives "with a smile!"



Powder Mill crew.

No one was smiling the evening of September 17, 1930, when the explosion rocked Mukilteo, then a small settlement along the north shore now referred to as "old town." The plant was located about a mile to the east on Mukilteo Boulevard just beyond the current eastern border of Mukilteo. A sign now identifies the area as Powder Mill Gulch. All of Mukilteo felt the impact and many homes were damaged. Even the residents of downtown Everett felt tremors from the blast and many buildings suffered damage.

Several residents were cut by shattered windows, but no one died from the explosion. In part this was due to the bravery of Tony Radonich and Risto Lucich, who crawled back after the initial destruction of the "nitroglycerin house" to contain the fire. Had the fire reached the main magazine, 65 tons of dynamite and black powder might well have exploded.

MHS appreciates all those who continue to bring in items of historical interest. In addition to the leaflets, Frauna and Erv Høglund brought in several photos and newspaper articles about the Powder Mill explosion. Frauna's grandfather, Steve Plancich, was foreman at the Powder Plant; her mother, Marie Plancich Barcott worked in the powder plant office until her marriage. ♦



Advertisement for Vulcan dynamite in Puget Sound & Alaska Powder Company leaflet.

A Message from our President

I hope you are enjoying this newsletter, particularly the review of all that has happened in 2015. It is impressive. Behind that record of successful programs, projects, and activities is a lot of planning and effort by a lot of people. At least forty individuals could be named almost immediately, and, of course, among them are those stellar volunteers who distinguished themselves by all that they did.

To name anyone risks overlooking many, but by limiting the focus to those leaving the ranks of officers and directors it is possible to single out three persons: Christopher Summitt, Carolyn Morrison, and Sheila Wright. Most of us know Christopher as our eloquent “Mukilteo Minute Man,” always winning kudos for his interesting and entertaining vignettes on Mukilteo history at our meetings. Hopefully he will continue these in 2016, but his official duties as first vice-president—which he performed ably—have now been completed.

Carolyn Morrison has been an exceptionally effective director, despite her soft-spoken manner. I knew I could always count on her to quietly and consistently contribute useful ideas and insights at meetings and on the many projects she has undertaken. She and Kevin have moved to Kingston, but they do hope to come back for as many activities as they can in 2016.

Finally, as acting treasurer, I can speak from personal experience about the high quality and exhausting quantity of work that was done by Sheila Wright as treasurer. The job requires organization, energy, and a meticulous mind-set, not to mention limitless patience in dealing with vendors, banks, insurance companies, cranky computers, and all too human volunteers. We are grateful for her service, and wish Sheila and Jim well in their new home in Arizona.

There were times during the past two years when I could hardly wait for the end of my presidency (others may have felt the same way!). But now as the end is actually drawing near, I realize just how much I have enjoyed the camaraderie within MHS and the satisfaction of working with others to resolve issues and advance the goals of the organization. So my emotions are mixed, but I am comforted by the fact that I intend to remain fully involved in MHS in the future, albeit in a less structured way.

Secondly, I am both reassured and excited by the quality of the new leaders elected to the board. Sometime ago I said at a board retreat that one of our most important goals as leaders was to find younger and better leaders for the future. Although said partly in jest, as I look at the board for 2016 I am deeply gratified by its balance of enthusiastic and talented newcomers alongside the highly capable and experienced veterans who remain on the board. We have had a great year, but, as the saying goes, the best is yet to come!

John Collier, President ♦



MHS Calendar

Saturday, December 5, noon to 4 pm - **Gift Shop open.**

Saturday, December 12, noon to 4 pm - **Gift Shop open.**

Saturday, December 12, 1 pm to 3 pm - **Santa at the Lighthouse.**

Saturday, December 12, 6 pm to 8 pm - **Holiday Party, Rosehill.**

Tuesday, January 5, 2016, 9 am - **Gift Shop Inventory.** Please come for an hour or two to help us complete our annual inventory. The only qualifications are being able to count and have fun. For more information, contact nancy@mukilteohistorical.org. ♦



Holiday Party

Join us on Saturday, December 12 for our annual holiday party.

The potluck will be in the Christiansen Room at Rosehill at 6 pm. Bring your favorite dish to share. ♦



Mukilteo Historical Society—The Year in Review

We've had a busy year! Here are a few highlights from 2015:

Mukilteo Mayor Jennifer Gregerson was the featured speaker at our January meeting. Thank you, Jennifer, for sharing a vision of what the Mukilteo waterfront makeover may look like.



Pioneer of the Year Lillian Anderson Cronkhite, with Mayor for a Day Rebecca Serati and Mukilteo Mayor Jennifer Gregerson.

At our February meeting, Jon Evavold told us how he came to carve Mukilteo's story pole, and he described the local symbols and icons that he carved into it. The pole was dedicated in 1992 and is located in Park Street Park on the way to the ferry.

In March, Fort Casey volunteer Stephen Kobylk presented a detailed history of the fort. Also that month, the light station was cleaned in preparation for the season, and volunteer training was conducted.

Chad Kaiser was our featured speaker in April, at which he described the precarious task of relocating a Fresnel lens in the Midwest. He also provided more insight into the lenses housed at the Mukilteo lighthouse.

Ann Collier and Laura McCarty told about the history of Brewery Gulch at the May meeting. MHS members also cleaned Pioneer Cemetery and conducted the Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony.

In June we heard from Everett Port Commissioner Tom Stiger, and in July, Deception Pass Park Ranger Rick Blank provided a fascinating history of Deception Pass. And volunteers worked hard planting lots of seasonal color around the Light Station!

In August, Lillian Anderson Cronkhite was named Mukilteo's Pioneer of the Year. She was joined by several family members as they recalled memories of growing up in Mukilteo. The Mukilteo Walking Tour also kicked off.

September saw the annual Mukilteo Lighthouse Festival ("MukFest"), where Ms. Cronkhite was featured in the annual parade and honored in a special ceremony. Rick Huey from WSDOT described the marine mammal monitoring he is conducting during the removal of the old Navy pier, and Rachel Myers described the range of marine mammals in our local waters. The volunteer potluck rounded out the month.

Elinor DeWire shared spooky lighthouse stories at our October meeting, and MHS members and supporters spent a day on Whidbey Island, touring Admiralty Head Lighthouse and the South Whidbey Historical Society Museum.



MHS members enjoy an outing to Admiralty Head Lighthouse.

In November, MHS officers and board members were elected for 2016, and MHS President John Collier reminisced on the year. ♦

Christmas at the Light Station

Please plan to stop by the Mukilteo Lighthouse gift shop either Saturday, December 5th or 12th, Noon to 4pm. The MHS elves have decorated the gift shop and some special items are for sale.



A limited number of Christmas-themed Harbour Point lighthouse replicas are available. These limited edition lighthouse are in mint condition in their original boxes and Certificate of Authenticity.

Seahawk mugs, originally \$12, are now \$9.50 each. Locally made goat milk soap is "buy one bar at \$5.50 and receive a 2nd bar at half price". Replicas, mugs, and soap are limited to stock on hand. Remember—all purchases include free gift wrapping.

Saturday, December 12th, 1 to 3pm, Santa will once again take time out of his busy schedule to be at our lighthouse. So mark your calendars and come down to do some shopping or give Santa your wish list.

Merry Christmas ♦



Did you know...

We recorded 16,877 visitors to the lighthouse this season! Thanks to all the volunteers who made this happen!

This number reflects the number of "clicks" recorded in the lighthouse. This number does not include tours, weddings, or visitors to the Light Station grounds. ♦

From the Archives...

It may surprise members to know that Mukilteo Historical Society owns over 1,000 historical artifacts, which we are currently working to catalog in a computer database. There are many fascinating items, which we will feature in future newsletters. A few of the items include:

-Several items from Nathaniel Fowler (brother of founder J.D. Fowler), who served the Union in the Civil War. We have his commission, his dress sword, and a tintype photo of him in uniform with the sword.



-Helen Hadenfeldt's postmaster certification from 1912. The postal service was unusual for hiring women at the time, but Hadenfeldt served many years and trained young women of the community as her clerks. She also had the foresight to preserve some of the postal accounts so we have information about what Mukilteo residents were sending and receiving at the beginning of the 20th century.

-*The People's Encyclopedia of Useful Information*, published in 1890 and inscribed "Property of P.N. Christiansen." We speculate that Keeper Christiansen interested himself with the book in the nights when he had to be up, tending the light every three hours.

These and other items will all be tagged with tracking numbers, photographed, and entered into the PastPerfect database so that researchers interested in Mukilteo and the Civil War, female postmasters, or P.N. Christiansen can find all the information we have on these topics and many, many more.



Introducing our Special Tour Leaders **Marianne Anderson and Kris Hoffman**

From an interview with Marianne Anderson...

How did you get interested in lighthouses and MHS?

As teachers (now retired), Kris and I would bring our second and third grade students down to Mukilteo park over the years for a day at the beach. So we've always had an interest in our area. About 2 years ago, Kris connected with Ann Collier to help with school tours, which in turn led her to ask me to join in. Ann has been training us to take over as co-chairs for special tours. Since both of us are busy travelling and spending time with grandkids, we thought it would work well for us to share the position. So we officially took over this past spring. We're so thankful for Ann's generous help and guidance.

What are "special tours"?

Special tours encompass visitors requesting time at the lighthouse and adjoining exhibits outside of regular hours. Local schools have visited, with our largest group (120 students) coming from Columbia Elementary. Our busiest time of year is the spring, just before school lets out for the summer, although this past summer we had an art group and girl scout troupe. Anyone can request a tour if they have 10 or more people and we have enough volunteers.

What are some memorable tour moments?

Most notable so far was a surprise wedding proposal in the tower and a visit from a lighthouse association board member from England.

About our special tour leaders:

Kris retired 10 years ago after teaching second and third grade for 30 years. She lives in Mukilteo with her husband and enjoys traveling and spending time with her grandchildren.

Marianne retired 2 years ago after teaching mostly second grade for 35 years. She lives in Old town and enjoys a daily view of the lighthouse.

They hope to develop more of a relationship with Mukilteo schools and visitors of all ages. Marianne and Kris are looking for more volunteers to help with the tours—it's a great way to get involved on a flexible schedule.



Mukilteo Walking Tour



Have you been on the Mukilteo Walking Tour yet? You can pick up a colorful brochure around town and enjoy a stroll around Mukilteo while learning a bit about its history. Or go to mukilteowalkingtour.com to take the tour virtually!

Gift Shop News

With the 2015 season coming to a close, your gift shop buyers are already working on stocking the gift shop for 2016. In preparation for the gift show in January, merchandise catalogs are being reviewed as they arrive.

In addition to new items from our established suppliers, we are working with a few new suppliers to add more custom items to our inventory, such as a new lighthouse token.



New Lighthouse Token

In 2016 we would also like to have a new postcard image and for this we need your help. If you have a photo of our lighthouse, please upload it to the MHS Dropbox or email it to Nancy at nancy@mukilteohistorical.org. Note: the image file needs to be large enough to allow possible editing and ensure clarity. Also, all rights to the image will become the property of the supplier that produces the postcard.

One last note - all of this planning and ordering would come to nothing without each of you who help in the gift shop. Whether you welcome our guests and assist them with their shopping experience or work behind the scenes to deliver boxes or get merchandise ready for sale, you make it all possible.

THANK YOU to the best volunteers, who always make MHS proud.

Your Gift Shop Buyers – Kim Nguyen and Nancy Joao ◆

And the Winners are...

Congratulations to the incoming MHS leaders, elected at the November meeting. MHS leaders for 2016 include:

Officers

- President Don Saul
- 1st Vice President Sally Morrison
- 2nd Vice President Joanne Mulloy
- Secretary Margaret Summitt
- Treasurer Daniel Valerio

Directors

- Mary Dulin
- Becky Owensby
- Lisa Romo-Bremerthon
- Lynette Stefansson-Goad
- Candy Sterling



In Memoriam

Albert Losvar, longtime MHS member and brother of Art Losvar, died on August 13 of injuries received in an airplane accident. Albert, born in 1927, was raised in Mukilteo and was involved in the Losvar family business, the Mukilteo Boat-house. In 1962, he and his family moved to Eastern Washington. The Mukilteo Historical Society extends its condolences to the Losvar family. ◆



Mukilteo Historical Society Inc.
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2015

Directors

- Carolyn Morrison*
- Sally Morrison*
- Becky Owensby*
- Lisa Romo-Bremerthon*
- Lynette Stefansson*

Officers

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John Collier

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Christopher Summitt

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Voice mail (425) 513-9602

Weddings

Mim Loree

Special Tours

Kris Hoffman
Marianne Anderson

Membership

Eileen Pridmore

Newsletter

Mary Dulin – Editor

MHS Website

www.mukilteohistorical.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Return this form with your payment to:

Mukilteo Historical Society - 304 Lincoln Avenue, Suite 101, Mukilteo, WA 98275

Individual - \$15 Senior (65) - \$10 Senior Couple - \$20 Family - \$25

Corporate - \$50 Sustaining - \$100 Benefactor - \$300 Life - \$500

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