

MHS Newsline

EBB AND FLOW: JAPANESE GULCH THEN AND NOW

by Annabelle Kisky

In 1905, Mukilteo's population was just 350 people, 150 of whom were Japanese immigrants (Anderson, 2020). These pioneers left the only homes they had ever known and made their way more than 4,000 miles across the vast Pacific Ocean, taking up residence in a small town on the shores of Puget Sound. They were a vibrant and important part of the economy and community. Sadly, a series of catastrophic events caused many of these Japanese immigrants to move from Mukilteo. However, their presence is still felt in many memorable, meaningful ways.

From There to Here

One might wonder, "What propelled the original influx of Japanese immigrants to the Pacific Northwest?" For most of Japan's existence, it was an island nation with an isolationist policy. Up until the conclusion of the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan maintained a strong stance on remaining fiercely independent (The Library of Congress, n.d.). In the late 19th century, changing U.S. government policy threatened Japan, forcing them to begin engaging in trade with the United States or face mili-



Mukilteo Lumber Company (Later Crown Lumber) employed many Japanese workers

tary action (The Library of Congress, n.d.). Japan's subsequent rapid industrialization and the push to adopt Western values caused great instability, especially for Japan's rural communities. Many workers lost their jobs to overseas competition, and the Japanese economy experienced a steep decline (The Library of Congress, n.d.). Many Japanese citizens seeking opportunity opted to cross the ocean from the west side of the Pacific Rim to the Pacific Northwest. Mukilteo was one of the many towns in the United States that saw a resultant influx of Japanese immigrants, attracted by the prospect of reliable employment and a booming American economy.

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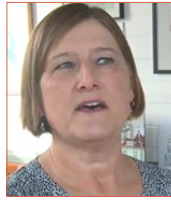
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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



It's unbelievable we are this far into the summer. So much has occurred in a short period of time! MHS opened for the season on Saturday, April 29th as planned. Staffing was incomplete at that time and still can be resolved a day ahead. Most shifts are filled leaving only a few openings for vacation relief. The hours of 1-4pm on Saturday and Sunday are going well. Other lighthouses have similar hours. The number of visitors and gift shop revenue has been remarkable. It requires more cleaning and maintenance due to added wear and tear. Music in the Park Saturday hours extend to 6pm. On Lighthouse Festival Saturday the shift will extend to 7pm. A huge thank you to the many volunteer staff members who are working to make the 2023 season a success! Volunteers continue to come forward, which puts MHS in a better position for the 2024 season.

The City of Mukilteo and MHS have a new license agreement signed, effective immediately, replacing the previous Facility Use Agreement. This agreement will be in effect for three years rather than two and includes new requirements that will be added to future training materials.

MHS has some fun opportunities for publicity. Seeing members in person at the meetings and while volunteering makes for easier and fun conversations. MHS general meetings included Craig Fisher talking on lighthouse tragedies, Mayor Joe Marine doing a Q and A format and Roberta Young Jonnet speaking on the Women's Book Club. The USLHS podcaster for Lighthearted has invited MHS to be

interviewed for an upcoming episode! Gardening volunteers get to interact with visitors and potentially recruit new volunteers. Public Works has done more maintenance since the opening. Landscaping was removed to open the view to the waterfront bringing more sun to the raised flowerbed for blooms.

The Exhibit Team freshened up the exhibits in Quarters B in preparation for opening. Sharon and Mark Sutherland and Ann Collier led a team from the Tulalip Tribes for a tour of the buildings. This is the beginning of discussions for a future exhibit in Quarters B.

Tina Saunders is ordering more gift shop stock to ensure there are items to sell in the gift shop. With so many visitors, it has been a challenge and her work is key to the success of the gift shop this year. Using local vendors has made it easier when items are needed quickly. Thanks to Mitch Owensby for deliveries and recycling pickup. Teamwork!

Although it's a lot and sometimes too much, I love my work with MHS and its dedicated members. Whether it's preparing for a meeting, talking to visitors in the lighthouse, or gardening on Fridays, I enjoy the exchanges and ideas that come from it. The support received this year, one of our most challenging, has inspired me. I appreciate all you do to keep this organization growing through unprecedented challenges.

May we all continue to flourish this summer!

~JOANNE MULLOY,
MHS PRESIDENT

Fortunately, Mukilteo was more welcoming to the Japanese immigrants than some other neighboring towns, where White inhabitants literally rioted and ran them out (Riddle, 2007). One of the major employers in the Northwest was Mukilteo Lumber Company, established in 1903 and purchased by Crown Lumber Company just six years later (Anderson, 2021). Many Japanese immigrants found employment in the lumber industry. This time of prosperity and opportunity gave rise to Mukilteo's "Japan Town," an area known to present-day Mukilteo dwellers as Japanese Gulch (Bruestle, 2012). After workers came to the United States, their families soon followed. A 1922 photo from Rosehill Elementary School shows a class with smiling faces, and a student body that was almost half Japanese (Lamoureux Real Estate Blog, 2021).

Unfortunately, in the scope of Mukilteo's history, this bustling, burgeoning Japanese community was ultimately relatively short-lived due to a series of devastating events. A major shingle mill was destroyed by fire in 1929, and the two major lumber producers in the gulch, Crown Lumber and Yukon Lumber, shuttered their doors in 1930 (Anderson, 2021). Coinciding with these catastrophic closures, the world faced the Great Depression, a decade of economic decline threatening the livelihoods of working-class families across the country. Combined, these events caused much of Mukilteo's Japanese population to move away and pursue work elsewhere.

After the Depression, the remaining Japanese residents of the Mukilteo area would experience even more strife. The attack on Pearl Harbor and the beginning of World War II caused many White Americans to declare both Japan-born *issei* (first generation) and American citizen *nisei* (second generation), as a threat to American national security (National Archives and Records Administration, 2022). In February 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the executive order that would usher in the introduction of internment camps throughout the U.S., shamefully separating and imprisoning the families that had helped our country prosper for the past three decades (National Archives and Records Administration, 2022). These people were stripped of their homes and livelihoods and imprisoned with poor conditions and little freedom. When the only internment camp in Washington, the Puyallup Assembly Center filled, Washington residents were sent to out-of-state internment camps, many never to return (Fiset, 2020; National Archives and Records Administration, 2022).

Echoes from the Past

Though the Japanese who helped build Mukilteo are gone, we can still appreciate their contributions and walk in their footsteps. In 2011, the City of Mukilteo's Fish Passage project unearthed historical relics buried in the historic Japanese Gulch soil (Bruestle, 2012).

Archaeology students from Edmonds Community College's Learn and Serve Environmental Anthropology Field (LEAF) School unearthed many artifacts from the long-gone residents and families of Japanese Gulch (Bruestle, 2012). Their treasured finds included leather shoes, a tin of Japanese "cure-all" balm, placards with family names and Confucian quotes, bottles and cups, ceramic bowls, and even colorful marbles that were likely played with by the children of the Japan Town families (Bruestle, 2012).

Remembrance and Restoration

One can't help but wonder, what if the Japanese families who helped foster Mukilteo's early growth weren't driven out by circumstance? How different would Mukilteo look today if any of these tragedies hadn't happened? It is daunting to consider the distance, cultural differences, and difficulties these people endured,

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GIFT SHOP NEWS

The season is in full swing, and the gift shop team has been busy! The new sweatshirts sold so well that we



were down to only four at the end of June. Fortunately, our local vendor (Vindico in Lynnwood) was able to quickly print more and we are now restocked with apparel that include a new heather green hoodie and sky-blue zipper jackets. We even worked with them to produce a new navy tote that looks amazing.

We have seen lots of kids coming through the gift shop this year so we placed an order to restock children's books and plush stuffed animals. So many adorable new creatures to choose from including whales, seal puppets, otters, octopi, and turtle hatchlings. Many of these treasures are crafted from recycled plastic, ensuring they're not only environmentally friendly but also incredibly soft to the touch.

Our experiment working with Native NW in Vancouver has gone very well. This company works with indigenous artists and features artwork on their products. A portion of proceeds for their children's books goes towards early education supporting indigenous children. A reorder has been placed as we were almost sold out, and it will arrive before this newsletter is released.

A big thank you to Sue Anderson, Mary McElroy, Ramona Stafford and Sandy Tyler for getting everything priced and on the floor. You all are AMAZING and have so much fun working together. We will continue keeping you busy! We also want to thank Mark Sutherland for getting the whiteboard up in the back area. It has become a great tool to help us keep track of requests, what we are running low on and what has been ordered. Such a great way to keep everyone in the loop.

If you haven't been in lately, be sure to stop by for a visit. As a reminder, we are open every Saturday and Sunday from 1-4pm through September. If you would prefer a private visit on a different day or time, email Shop-Local@mukilteohistorical.org and we will make every effort to schedule an appointment for you at the Gift Shop.

~SUE ANDERSON & TINA SAUNDERS

SPONSORS

If you're receiving this newsletter as a sponsor, thank you for your support! If you're able to continue supporting MHS, renewal reminders were recently sent to business email addresses with payment instructions.

MHS is accepting sponsorships from area businesses at the following levels:

- ♦ Basic at \$50 per year
- ♦ Sustaining at \$100 per year
- ♦ Benefactor at \$300 per year

Sponsor's logos and website information are posted in the lighthouse, gift shop and quarterly newsletters. Additional information can be found on the MHS website: Mukilteohistorical.org

Click Menu, Support and Shop, Sponsorships.

If you have questions about the status of your sponsorship or membership, please contact Sharon Sutherland at: mhsmembership1906@gmail.com

~SHARON SUTHERLAND



CEMETERY CORNER

As Sharon Sutherland and I were clearing ivy last May from the grave of Joseph Radley, we met Gunnar Almgren, a neighbor to the Pioneer Cemetery. Gunnar told us about his Halloween visit to Radley's grave when he was a kid. This was in the 1950s, before the cemetery was restored.

At that time ivy and weeds covered everything. Gunnar and his fellow trick-or-treaters were spooked by Radley and his grave. They misread his name as "Badley" and assumed he was a "bad guy." His companions dared Gunnar to eat his Halloween candy beside the grave.

I told Gunnar the real story of Joseph Radley, how he came from England, married a Native American woman who had been abused by her first husband, nursed her through her last illness; how he lived thereafter by himself in a shack four miles south of Mukilteo, and died of an apparent heart attack while washing his dishes.

When you know the real story of the inhabitants of a cemetery, it makes them and their place less spooky. I believe they will thank us for taking the time to learn about them. These histories are told in my book, "Mukilteo Pioneer Cemetery: Honoring our History."

~MARGARET SUMMITT



*Volunteers for the cemetery clean-up on May 20th
gather for a group selfie!*

Events Calendar



August 2023

Thursday, August 10
7pm General Membership Meeting
at Rosehill

Thursday, August 31
6:30pm Board Meeting

September 2023

Friday—Sunday September 8-10
Lighthouse Festival

Thursday, September 14
7pm General Membership Meeting
at Rosehill

Thursday, September 28
6:30pm Board Meeting

Saturday, September 30
1-4pm Last Day of the Season

October 2023

Remember!!!

Thursday, October 12
7pm General Membership Meeting
at Rosehill

Thursday, October 26
6:30pm Board Meeting

Saturday, October 28
**1-4pm Members & Friends Sale/
Opening**

just for one chance at a better life. There's no doubt that they risked almost everything they had to come to the United States. Over time, the former "Japan Town" grounds have evolved. Now, people from all over come to explore the 4 miles of hiking trails with towering trees, abundant flora and fauna, and gorgeous views of Puget Sound (Washington Trails Association, n.d.). There's currently an effort to daylight part of the creek that was buried during its former use as a spot for fuel tank production (City of Mukilteo, 2017). The space is set to be restored for use by local fish and wildlife once again. Design for the project was completed in December 2021, and in October of 2022, the City of Mukilteo accepted a \$201,880 state grant to help pay for permits to keep the project moving forward (Mukilteo City Council, 2022).



Japanese Settlement in Japanese Gulch

Today, Japanese Gulch is a vibrant, verdant, living memorial to Mukilteo's rich history and the courageous Japanese community that helped it prosper.



Ebb and Flow: Japanese Gulch Then and Now is the winning essay from the Mukilteo Historical Society's 2023 historical essay contest program. It was written by Annabelle Kisky, a recent graduate of Renton High School and a full-time Running Start student at Bellevue College. She plans to attend the University of Washington Tacoma and major in Psychology or Criminology.

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MUKILTEO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please review the membership categories below carefully. As a member you will receive an exclusive member decal, quarterly newsletter and a 10% discount in the gift shop. Your donation is tax deductible. Membership runs from January 1st to December 31st. Return this form and your payment to:
Mukilteo Historical Society – 304 Lincoln Avenue, Suite 101 – Mukilteo, WA 98275

Membership Type:

- ☐ \$15 - INDIVIDUAL
 ☐ \$10 - SENIOR (65 OR OVER)
 ☐ \$20 - SENIOR COUPLE
 ☐ \$25 - FAMILY
☐ \$500 – LIFE
 ☐ DONATION ONLY –provide name and address so we may acknowledge your donation

Corporate Applications are available at mukilteohistorical.org or by emailing memberships@mukilteohistorical.org

Applicant #1 Data*:

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail _____

Applicant #2 Data*: *Please use a second application form for more than two applicants in family memberships.*

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail _____

☐ Help us GO GREEN! Check this box to opt-in for paperless-only newsletters

For each applicant, please check the volunteer areas of interest (if any):	#1	#2
Archives/Trunk Treasures – Collect & archive all documents, photos and artifacts relating to the history of Mukilteo. Organize exhibits. Present Trunk tales throughout the community		
Garden – Join our group of gardeners or adopt a specific garden bed at the light station		
Gift Shop – Help to price, stock and maintain inventory. Operate credit card processing terminal and cash register.		
Lighthouse – Become a lighthouse tour guide.		
Maintenance – Liaison to Board about Light Station/Pioneer Cemetery issues and plans.		
Publicity – Advertising (Beacon/Herald/etc.). MHS Newsletter, Membership mailing (Sunshine)/emails/phoning		
Special Tours – Assist with docent tours, field trips & visiting groups.		
Technology – Website, internet, social media		
Weddings – Welcome guests & provide tours for wedding guests.		

How did you hear about the Mukilteo Historical Society?

☐ Lighthouse Visit
 ☐ Newspaper
 ☐ Website
 ☐ Friend
 ☐ Other _____

For office use only: Date Received _____ ☐ Added to Membership Roster ☐ Exclusive Membership Decal Sent

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