

MHS Newsline

Mukilteo and the Works Progress Administration (WPA)

by Ann and John Collier

Most of us have some familiarity with American and world history as well as a sense of the past here in Mukilteo. But what do we know about the effect of global events on the lives of our past residents?



*Floral Hall Forest Park
Everett, WA*

Take, for example, the impact of the global economic crisis in the 1930s which was known in America as the Great Depression. Mukilteo was very much a “company town” that was heavily dependent on the Crown Lumber Company. When that company closed in 1930, and a nearby gunpowder plant blew up, many Mukilteo residents were suddenly thrown into the ranks of the unemployed.

It was estimated nationally in 1933 that 24.9 percent of all available labor was out of work. There are no reliable statistics for Mukilteo, but there is an abundance of anecdotal evidence of the hard times in our “remote ferry town” and its environs. At the national level, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was begun in 1935, with its series of projects to employ workers throughout the country. The WPA employed some 8.5 million workers with federal money during the years 1935-1943.

Many local and regional projects focused on the construction of infrastructure. One of the earliest WPA initiatives was the replacement of the first bridge across Pigeon Creek No. 1 by a landfill, improving the Mukilteo Boulevard road to Everett. At Forest Park, Floral Hall was built, and works projects included tree planting and the concrete retention walls that line Mukilteo Boulevard. At Legion Park, the

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MUKILTEO HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



2024 has had an interesting start. The Board agreed to cancel the annual planning meeting and use other meetings and email to accomplish that work. The January general membership meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. The agenda will move to February when I'll share 2023 accomplishments and 2024 goals. The Board will meet soon to establish goals and a budget for the upcoming year.

strong part of this project. Working with Public Works and Lighthouse Environmental Programs (LEP) has been a fun collaboration.

MHS structure, documents and finances are strong thanks to Al Friedrich and the Finance Team. The gardening team consistently worked through warmer months. Daffodils were up in the gardens last month before the cold spell. The Archive Team, under Peter Anderson's leadership, added searchable items to PastPerfect, met with community members,

**“ Maintaining what has been created
with hard work will be a huge win. ”**

Last year, the City of Mukilteo painted and cleaned the roofs of Quarters A and B. A team from one of the naval ships painted fences. The BIG accomplishments of MHS were remaining in Quarters A and re-opening each weekend for the season after limited openings over the last three years and limited staffing. Several volunteers worked 2-3 shifts a month to make it work.

Heading into a new year the planned preservation project is recoating the gallery deck outside the lighthouse tower. The tower has been closed for safety since 9/30/23. Grant funding requests have been submitted and a bid is pending. This project was identified during the 2018 inspection of the lighthouse along with a detailed plan for preservation of the historic light station. Jerry Arnold's attention to detail, investigations and documentation are a

wrote articles, and sorted through historical information.

The gift shop thrived last year under the leadership of Tina Saunders and the gift shop team and staff. Local vendors made the process more efficient. With the gift shop open every weekend, revenue was higher than in the past three years. Several vendors who supply Mukilteo merchandise decided to retire so that revenue was used to buy up their stock. Sadly, Tina Saunders has resigned as buyer. I am grateful for her creativity and pivots during tense years. We are looking for someone to take over her work as soon as possible. There are several open positions to fill. During the pandemic, many of the vacated roles and tasks went to Board members which resulted in an overworked Board. The goal is to distribute the work more evenly and establish new

staffing. New volunteers provide fresh perspectives and innovation. In March, there will be a work party to prep the lighthouse as well as training sessions for staff.

After a record number of weddings in 2022, they slowed down last year. Dona Fretz is already planning for the wedding season. A record number of special tours last year were led by Marianne Anderson and Kris Hoffman. Many students had their first ever field trip at the lighthouse. Exhibits were updated in the lighthouse prior to opening and the timeline exhibit in Quarters B was refreshed. Muk Revisited articles were published in the Mukilteo Beacon. Lighthouse Festival was a success and MHS always works hard that weekend. The End of Season potluck was held for the first time since 2019. The first Christmas party in as many years was planned by Sharon Sutherland who hosted along with Mark Sutherland for a delightful evening. Al Friedrich played piano for us; a wonderful way to celebrate the end of a big year.

The major goal going into the new year is to strengthen what MHS did last year. Goals from previous years will be worked once outside help is obtained (like researching the lens and interpretive sign updates). Maintaining what has been created with hard work will be a huge win. There is still interest in having hybrid meetings so out-of-town members can join membership meetings. If you have any interest in any of the activities mentioned, let me know. Thanks for joining me on my eighth year as president. I'm excited about what's ahead in 2024!

~JOANNE MULLOY,
MHS PRESIDENT



Holiday Party Photos

At the holiday party in December, Sharon Sutherland hosted and Al Friedrich entertained the audience with festive music.



land was cleared and another park created.

Paine Field was begun at that time and the Everett Public Library was built. Historians Paul Dorpat and Genevieve McCoy report that “by 1941 the WPA had funded 28,000 miles of road, 1,000 bridges, 26 libraries, 193 parks, 380 miles of sewers, 15,500 traffic signs, 90 stadiums, and 760 miles of water mains in the state.”

The WPA also supported numerous cultural projects, paying artists for 225,000 works of visual art, including murals and posters. One of the valuable contributions was a program in Washington State in which pioneers and their descendants were interviewed to produce several books entitled *Told By the Pioneers*. An interview with Louisa Sinclair (daughter of Mukilteo founder, Jacob Fowler) was published in 1938.

Bevo Dudder Ellis, a founding member of the Mukilteo Historical Society (MHS), often shared stories about how her uncle, Jack Charters, got a WPA job to produce dramatic productions in Mukilteo, 1936-1937. These plays were held at the Royal Neighbors Lodge (Hawthorne Hall). Mayme Dudder Ross wrote: “The depression also was the founding of the Grange Players by Jack Charters and his wife Noreen. I had the pleasure of being on the team and a series of plays were given in and around Mukilteo and Everett—we did not become rich.”

Nationally, the WPA was expected to help the country by strategically infusing money into local economies and offsetting the negative psychological effect of unemployment. The Historical Society has anecdotal evidence of this connection. Dorothy M. Johansen, daughter of Ernest E. Day, Assistant Keeper of the Mukilteo Light Station from 1913 to 1918, wrote that “during the Depression, many people survived by barter. They would do work in exchange for some food, or maybe an old piece of furniture or a tool that they felt they needed. When the WPA was adopted, a neighbor of the Johansens came over to their house and announced that her husband had gotten a job with the WPA and ‘He was going to be paid with money’. The idea of having money again was so exciting the neighbors could hardly sleep that night.”

The WPA was definitely popular in Mukilteo!

If this topic piques your interest, please join us at MHS to pursue it further.



Jack and Noreen Charters



A mock wedding play at Hawthorne Hall in the 1930s featuring Jack Charters as the minister

UPCOMING TRAINING FOR LIGHTHOUSE AND GIFT SHOP

Saturday, April 6th is opening day for the 2024 season! In preparation for that, there will be training and cleaning to prepare. This is the opportunity each year for deep cleaning. Afterwards, the windows, floors, bathrooms, and displays will sparkle. All volunteer staff are required to attend one of the two general training sessions offered. Keyholders attend a separate training course to review procedures and responsibilities and are also required to attend the general training session. Questions will be addressed along with strategies for working with the public. The lighthouse tower will be closed for the first part of the season and will be discussed.

Please mark your calendars.

\$1,500 ESSAY CONTEST PRIZE

Don't let your eligible student miss this chance to win the Society's annual \$1,500 prize. As before, the prize will be awarded to the student who submits a winning essay about some aspect of Mukilteo history. The award each year is applied to tuition expense in the winner's name to the school selected by the winner. The essay contest is open to 12th year students. Details can be found at the Society's web site by clicking on "Essay Contest" at www.mukilteohistorical.org

Remember, there's no restriction on an essay topic except that it must relate to some person, place, event, or other aspect of Mukilteo's past. Two examples would be the effects of the Point Elliott Treaty and recollections of the building of Kamiak High School. So, remind those children or grandchildren (no matter which school districts they live in) that there's some money out there to be won.

Events Calendar

February 2024

- ♦ **Thursday, February 8**
7pm **General Membership Meeting**
at Rosehill
- ♦ **Thursday, February 29**
6:30pm **Board Meeting via Zoom**

March 2024



- ♦ **Saturday, March 9**
10am-12pm **Volunteer Training**
Lighthouse
- ♦ **Thursday, March 14**
7pm **General Membership Meeting**
at Rosehill
- ♦ **Saturday, March 16**
11:30am-12:30pm **Keyholder Training**
1pm-3pm **Volunteer Training**
Lighthouse
- ♦ **Saturday, March 23**
10am **Annual Cleaning**
- ♦ **Thursday, March 28**
6:30pm **Board Meeting via Zoom**



April 2024

- ♦ **Saturday, April 6**
1pm **Opening Day**
- ♦ **Thursday, April 11**
7pm **General Membership Meeting**
at Rosehill
- ♦ **Thursday, April 25**
6:30pm **Board Meeting via Zoom**

CEMETERY CORNER

On October 29, 2023, Gretchen Kaehler, Snohomish County Archaeologist and Cultural Resources Coordinator, enlightened the Stanwood Area Historical Society about the protections and state laws governing historic, neglected, and abandoned cemeteries, as well as historic gravesites.

Kaehler recounted instances where cities and agencies, during property development, stumbled upon historic remains. For instance, the city of Oak Harbor, before widening Pioneer Way in 2011, sent a letter to the State Department of Archaeology, learning of a potential Indian burial site. However, the exact location remained unknown, leading to an oversight. The consequences became apparent when a human skull rolled out during excavation, and additional remains were discovered in the fill dirt. Recovering all the remains through water screening took a year and a half, costing the city \$3 million beyond the \$6 million estimate, requiring the hiring of a contract archaeologist.

Property owners in the county can contribute by preserving information about private and family cemeteries and taking action if non-forensic human remains are found. For family-owned cemeteries, documenting information and submitting a cemetery inventory form to the state Department of Historic Preservation is crucial. Historical societies should continue digitizing local newspapers for a comprehensive record of burial locations.

If human remains are discovered on your property, it's essential to halt activities and protect the area, reporting the find to local authorities. In cases of non-forensic remains (not linked to a crime), the Department of Historic Preservation (DAHP) will intervene, and taking these steps ensures protection from liability.

While the DAHP has a database of cemeteries in Washington State, the location of all cemeteries remains unknown. Intriguingly, as the Pioneer Cemetery historian, I learned that the DAHP has never identified a historic cemetery within its fenced boundaries.

~MARGARET SUMMITT

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Hi, I am Jerry Arnold; MHS Board member and Membership Chairperson for 2024. I hope you will enjoy occasional bits of information related to lighthouse history that I plan to share throughout the year. My own journey to this role starts from a mechanical engineering background (just ask if you want details) and an interest in preservation. We mortals seem to be good at building things but not so good at maintaining them; that shiny new thingy is always more attractive than the aging monument in need of repair.

And since no one person knows all the answers, we must rely on one another to fill the gaps in our knowledge. The members of MHS and other historic preservation groups provide a community to learn with and to lean on when you have questions.

I see each and every member of MHS as a valued resource, with knowledge, and experiences to share. This allows every one of us the opportunity to become better at what we do. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Please welcome the following NEW members to MHS:

- ♦ **Carey Ginos**
- ♦ **Bob Stuart**
- ♦ **The Mukilteo Food Bank**

We are grateful to have you join us!

~JERRY ARNOLD





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:

- o \$15 - INDIVIDUAL o \$10 - SENIOR (65 OR OVER) o \$20 - SENIOR COUPLE o \$25 - FAMILY
o \$500 – LIFE o 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?

o Lighthouse Visit o Newspaper o Website o Friend o Other _____

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

2024 SPONSOR HONOR ROLL

The **Mukilteo Historical Society** thanks the following 2023 corporate sponsors who helped support its mission to preserve and exhibit items of historic value that pertain to the City of Mukilteo and its environs.

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