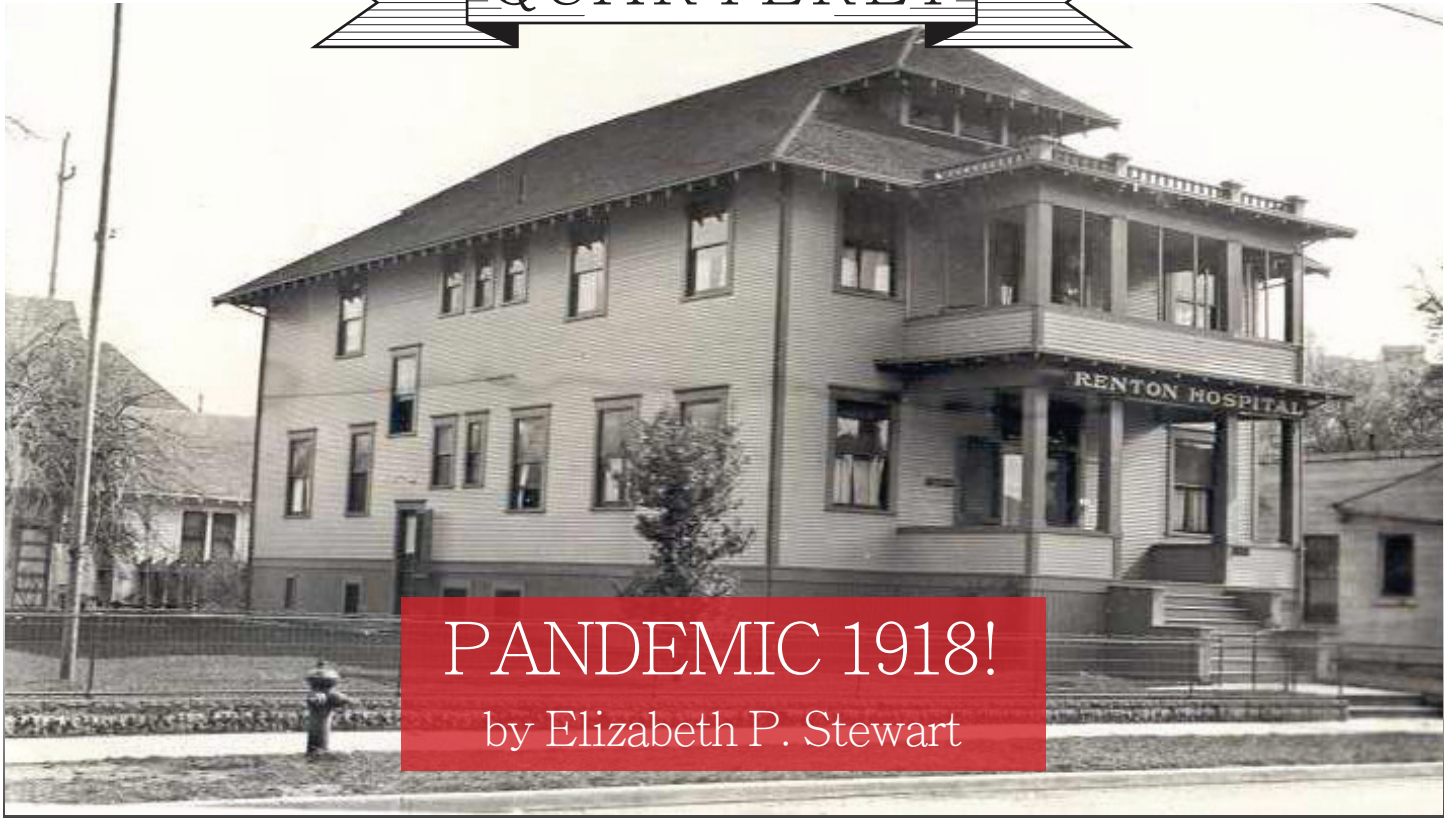


# RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Winter  
December 2014

QUARTERLY

Volume 45  
Number 4



## PANDEMIC 1918!

by Elizabeth P. Stewart

### FORWARD

*As Americans try to make sense of a few cases of Ebola virus coming to our shores, it seemed like a good time to revisit the most significant epidemic ever to hit our city. At the end of World War I, Americans watched with dread as Spanish influenza swept across the globe. Before it was finished the Spanish flu claimed an estimated 21 million lives. The virus reached the West Coast by autumn 1918, and Renton was not immune from either the dread or the deaths. The 1918-1919 flu pandemic reminded Rentonites that their quiet city was inextricably linked to the wider world.*

In late summer 1918 Americans watched as Spanish influenza spread from troop camps to their hometowns; the virus was so-named because the neutral country's lack of wartime censorship meant that Spanish newspapers were the first to openly talk about the horror of the virus.<sup>1</sup> In September 1918, the *Seattle Daily Times* told readers that "the odd feature of this European pandemic makes it necessary for Americans to understand about it and to be prepared for its advent and near invasion over here."<sup>2</sup> The "odd feature" of this particular flu was that the usually mild virus—with its fever, body aches, chest and sinus congestion—turned to death

Continued on page 5

## Also In This Issue...



2 *Furry Friends*  
| upcoming exhibit at  
RHM.



3 Museum Report  
| by Elizabeth P.  
Stewart, Director.



4 President's Report  
| by Stefanie McIrvin,  
President.



8 RenTeens' Report  
| by Cassie, Oscar &  
Jenny

# Henri, le Chat Noir



The Existential Musings of an Angst-Filled Cat

WILLIAM BRADEN

Come see Internet cat video superstar Will Braden, creator of Henri, le Chat Noir! Using clips of historic videos, Will shows us that the fascination with filming our pets certainly is not new.

MARCH 19

5:30 pm



## FURRY FRIENDS: FROM FADS TO FAMILY

Long before YouTube and Instagram made pet images an inescapable part of today's pop culture, Renton's inhabitants were posing with pets of their own, sometimes in hilarious fashion. This lighthearted exhibit celebrates the familial connections between people and their furry best friends and explores the human fascination with capturing our pets' antics on camera. The exhibit will feature a large selection of photographs from the Museum's collection along with a late 19<sup>th</sup> Century mock-photo studio setting. Bring your well-behaved Fido and Fluff and snap your own "historic" pet photo!

From  
FEBRUARY  
17  
To  
AUGUST  
29

## MOURNING THE LOSS OF COUNCILMEMBER TERRI (MATHEWSON) BRIERE (1951-2014)

The staff and Board of the Renton History Museum are very sad to note the death of Councilmember Terri Briere on November 9, 2014. Councilmember Briere was one of Renton history's strongest supporters; among her many accomplishments were chairing the Renton High School Centennial Committee and spearheading the effort to rescue and restore the Roxy Theatre sign when the theatre was sold. As Councilmember, Terri served as the City Liaison

to the Renton Historical Society Board of Trustees. A lifetime resident of Renton, Terri and her husband Bill owned Briere and Associates, a general contracting firm that was very generous in helping with the renovation of our offsite storage building. Her husband Bill, who passed away in August, was also a key member of the team planning for the renovation of the museum lobby. Terri was always interested in the preservation of Renton's historic places,

but at the same time as a Councilperson she recognized the need to move forward and make room for major investments by The Landing, the Federal Reserve, and the Seahawks organization. She will be much missed by everyone whose lives she touched, but she has left a legacy that will continue on.

Top: Terri Briere, RHS Class of 1969; Bottom: Councilmember Briere receives the Custer Award for Heritage Citizenship in June 2008.





# MUSEUM REPORT

by Elizabeth P. Stewart,  
Museum Director

Many of you will have no idea what the Renton History Museum staff spends its time doing to meet our mission of documenting, preserving, interpreting, and educating about Renton's history. This past week was a great example, so I present to you a week in the life of a museum:

- Visitor Experience Coordinator Colleen Lenahan oversaw our last program for *Newcastle: Little Giant of the Eastside* on Thursday, as Newcastle Historical Society member Mike Intelkofer shared Milt Swanson's collection and his own considerable knowledge about mining tools and processes. (EDUCATING)
- Colleen moved on to research and preparations for our next exhibit, *Furry Friends: From Fads to Family*, opening in February. (INTERPRETING and EDUCATING)
- Colleen worked with the RenTeens, our teen advisory council, to identify their goals for the coming year. (EDUCATING)
- Volunteer (and former intern) Ellie DiPietro built acid-free boxes for objects. (PRESERVING)
- Collection Manager Sarah Samson supervised UW intern Brianne Baird, as she researched our collection of Duwamish artifacts. (DOCUMENTING and PRESERVING)
- Sarah taught a UW Museology Program Preservation and Management of Collections History Lab to students who are researching objects in our collection as they learn. (DOCUMENTING and PRESERVING)
- Sarah oversaw our regular Collections volunteers Jessica Kelly and Pearl Jacobson as they work on cataloguing archives materials and artifacts. (DOCUMENTING and PRESERVING)
- I researched and wrote this quarterly newsletter feature, "Pandemic 1918!" by combing through death records, newspapers, hospital records, diaries, and oral histories, with Sarah's help. (DOCUMENTING and EDUCATING)
- I also gave a talk to residents of the Renton Rehabilitation Center about the Duwamish people. (EDUCATING)
- We all helped researchers with questions about genealogy, Wiley Post's last trip out of Renton Airport, floods in Renton, and the Chief Seattle fountain. (EDUCATING)

And this doesn't even include all the work Museum Office Aide Laurie Lent does to keep the Museum's mission moving forward smoothly: processing memberships and donations, proofreading the newsletter, preparing bills for payment, answering phones, and, most importantly, greeting visitors. As you can see, every week we are focused on Renton's heritage, caring for it and telling other people about it. It is never dull and it is our passion!



Elizabeth P. Stewart  
—  
Director



Speaker Mike Intelkofer shows us the bright light produced by a carbide mining lamp.



Intern Brianne Baird with some of the Museum's Duwamish baskets and other artifacts.



Volunteer Ellie DiPietro building an acid-free box to house hat pins.

## RENTON HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Sarah Samson  
Graphic Design & Layout  
Karl Hurst  
City of Renton Print &  
Mail Services

## RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Stefanie McIrvine, President  
Meris Mullaley, Vice President  
Laura Clawson, Treasurer  
Elizabeth P. Stewart, Secretary  
Susie Bressan, 2015  
Sandra Meyer, 2015  
Alice Stenstrom, 2016  
Lisa Wivag, 2016  
Theresa Clymer, 2017  
Kim Sweet, 2017  
Vicki Jo Utterstrom, 2017

## MUSEUM STAFF

Elizabeth P. Stewart  
Museum Director  
Sarah Samson  
Collection Manager  
Colleen Lenahan  
Visitor Experience  
Coordinator  
Laurie Lent  
Office Aide  
Pearl Jacobson  
Volunteer Registrar

RENTON  
HISTORY MUSEUM  
235 MILL AVE. S  
RENTON, WA 98057

P (425) 255-2330  
F (425) 255-1570

HOURS:  
Tuesday - Saturday  
10:00am - 4:00pm

ADMISSION:  
\$3 (Adult)  
\$1 (Child)



**CULTURE**

## UPCOMING EVENTS



RAP 101: THE MESSAGE  
BEHIND THE MUSIC  
February 19  
5:30-7:00pm

Join “Professor E,” for a conversation exploring contemporary popular culture, diversity issues, and social justice through the lyrics of popular rap music.



GLOBAL HEAT: HIP HOP  
SOUL MUSIC AND DANCE  
February 28  
1:00-2:30pm

Enjoy Global Heat’s free-style rap and join a discussion about the history of hip hop dance and its origins in traditional African and Brazilian dance and martial arts.



FIRST SCULPTOR OF  
SEATTLE: THE LIFE &  
ART OF JAMES A. WEHN  
March 5  
7:00-8:00pm

Author and art historian Fred Poyner IV discusses his recent biography about Seattle sculptor James A. Wehn, the creator of the Chief Seattle fountain.

# PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

by Stefanie McIrvin, President

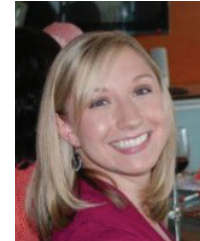
The last quarter has really flown by! Fall is generally one of our most busy times of the year, with our Finance Committee in the full swing of budget planning for next fiscal year and the Board keeping up with other important housekeeping items. October was especially busy for us, with Museum staff and Trustees focusing on planning and executing our seventh annual dinner and silent auction.

The auction went off without a hitch and we were very pleased to see so many of you—our members, volunteers, and donors—there to show your support of the Renton History Museum! In total we raised just over \$8,600 and sold over 60 different auction items. This was the first year that the Board decided to include a dessert dash, in addition to our traditional silent auction and raise the paddle event. The dessert dash was a huge success and made the event very festive and fun!

A huge thank you to Apogee Catering, who cooked the delicious catered buffet, and to Jazz Horn, who provided the musical entertainment. City Councilmember Ed Price contributed his upbeat energy and competitive auctioneering skills. Thank you, Ed, for emceeding! Our new teen advisory council, the RenTeens, was on hand to talk about their experiences at the Museum—thank you, Oscar Locke, Jenny Loo, and Cassie Dozier, for sharing your perspective on Renton’s history. Thanks also to Hazen High School’s Honors Society students for assisting with our auction, Renton Youth Services for assisting with the dinner service, Service Linen Supply for donating the linens for the dinner, and to Patricia Carroll for volunteering her bartending talents. We are grateful to all of our volunteers for donating their time and talents!

I also want to recognize the Museum staff for all their hard work on this event. Elizabeth Stewart, Sarah Samson, Colleen Lenahan, and Laurie Lent are without a doubt an amazing team and the Board simply could not pull off the dinner auction without them. Our Fundraising and Events Committee, comprised of Susie Bressan, Theresa Clymer, Vicki Utterstrom and Lisa Wivag, also deserve a round of applause for their planning talents and dedication to this event. Thank you, ladies!

In the next few weeks you will be receiving your membership renewal reminder from us. We hope you’ll continue to support the Museum and maybe even consider giving the gift of membership to someone you love over the holidays! Your support enables us to continue our mission of documenting, preserving, and interpreting Renton’s history for future generations—thanks for all you do!



Stefanie McIrvin  
—  
President



RenTeens Cassie Dozier, Jenny Loo, and Oscar Locke.



A packed house enjoys the dinner and silent auction.





Reese Williams (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) and James A. Tonkin (far right) in happier days, ca. 1908. Both would die of Spanish influenza in 1918. Charlie Tamborini (far left) would witness flu's devastation in Philadelphia as a young sailor. (RHM # 1967.007.0659)

Continued from page 1

by pneumonia for a much higher percentage of its sufferers than the typical “grippe” or summer flu. By late September 1918 Spanish flu had been reported in two-thirds of all U.S. Army camps, with a worrying increase in deaths among young recruits before they had even left to fight.<sup>3</sup>

Health officials in Seattle and other Washington cities watched East Coast precautions as they waited for the flu to reach the West Coast. Young Charlie Tamborini witnessed firsthand the virus’s devastation in Philadelphia when his ship, the *U.S.S. Folger*, put into port in late September. “Arrived in a rather bad time,” Tamborini noted in his diary. “The Spanish influenza is scattered all over town. Hundreds taking down with it and many dying.”<sup>4</sup> Philadelphia was one of the hardest hit Eastern cities.

In early October the Washington State Board of Health began requiring physicians to report all cases of Spanish influenza. On October 7 only six Washington counties reported cases of Spanish influenza; three days later flu had been reported in every county. Seattle Health Commissioner J. S. McBride began a campaign of public education about preventing the spread of the disease, asking sufferers to quarantine themselves at home where they could be tended by relatives.<sup>5</sup>

Advice to flu sufferers was to “go home at once and go to bed.”<sup>6</sup> Public health officials advised family members how

Cover: Renton Hospital, 1933. Influenza sufferers were advised to stay at home as long as they could, but those without families had to resort to the hospital. At least 32 Rentonites received inpatient treatment at the hospital during the outbreak. (RHM# 1997.080.7892)





Dr. Adolph Bronson (back row, second from right) and Renton Hospital staff, 1915. Nurses were vital to helping Renton's two doctors treat flu sufferers, yet were unrecorded. (RHM# 2000.127.8644)



to care for their loved ones—“wear a wrapper, apron or gown over the ordinary house clothes while in the sick room”—and assumed that doctors would make occasional house calls; serious cases with the means to do so could hire nurses.<sup>7</sup> Anne Marie Rossman’s whole family became ill, and her uncles moved in to help care for them. John W. Dobson remembered later that his father administered a spoonful of whisky to his kids every night to keep away the flu.<sup>8</sup>

Young bride Jessie Tulloch and her family had the flu, but went to the San Juan Islands anyway on a planned hunting trip. When they returned, they found that “Seattle had gone wild about the flu.”<sup>9</sup> People were advised to avoid large public gatherings. Civic and fraternal groups temporarily suspended their meetings. Seattle banned large public weddings, requesting that couples be married in private ceremonies with immediate family only. Anti-spitting rules were put in place in all public areas. “Every window in the streetcars was nailed open,” she recalled. “And you had to wear these masks on your face... And the rain was coming in, you were getting soaking wet before you got home.” She questioned the public health precautions, but everyone in her family recovered. “It’s a wonder you didn’t die out from the way they were trying to keep you alive,” Jessie observed.<sup>10</sup>

Spanish influenza hit at a very inauspicious time. “The





Ed Zilli (front row, far right) and his brother Ciro “Charles” (front row, 2nd from right) immigrated to the U.S. in 1906; by 1918, Ed had died of influenza. (RHM # 41.0003)

War to End All Wars” was drawing to a close. As Austria-Hungary requested an armistice, Rentonite Florence Guitteau observed, “in all our land schools[,] churches, theatres, lodges[,] clubhouses, pool rooms, etc are closed—all gatherings forbidden—and people instructed to keep children at home and to go about as little as possible.”<sup>11</sup> By Armistice Day, the children of Renton and Seattle had already been out of school for six weeks. At war’s end public health officials worried that nationwide celebrations might result in a new outbreak of disease.

By mid-October the *Renton Bulletin* noted, “we are unable to chronicle all those who are down with the Spanish influenza.”<sup>12</sup> Renton physicians Adolph Bronson and Charles L. Dixon attended to the ill in their homes and at the Renton Hospital. The *Bulletin* pronounced Dr. Dixon “the busiest man in Renton.” Somehow he was able to obtain one hundred doses of serum for the prevention of the flu, at a time when it was very difficult to get.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Bronson’s call book and hospital admission book also demonstrated that the Spanish influenza hit Renton hard in October and early November. Those dire cases that ended up at Renton Hospital were often single men—miners or loggers—with no one to care for them. Most of the twenty-two people who were admitted to Renton Hospital in October and November 1918 recovered, however. Most were men in their

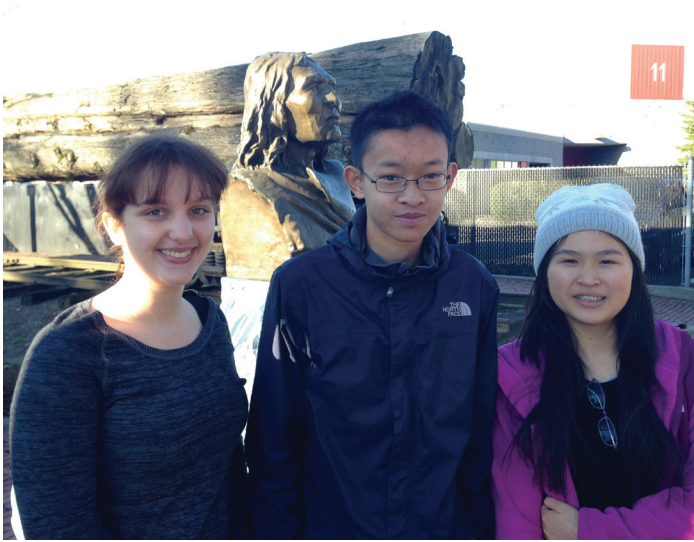
twenties and thirties, and probably at the peak of their health.

Twenty-six-year-old Reese Williams was probably the first Spanish influenza casualty among Rentonites, although he died in a U.S. Naval Hospital in Panama City, Florida on September 23. The son of coal miner David S. Williams and his wife Sarah, Reese had been working as a machinist in Bremerton when the U.S. joined WWI, and he immediately enlisted in the Navy. He was a First Class Machinist on the *U.S.S. Tallahassee* when he caught the flu and died.<sup>14</sup>

A few of the early sufferers in Renton also did not make it. Thirty-year-old Ed Zilli was a miner and a farmer, but his real love was music. He died in October 1918, leaving behind a young wife Armida Pistoressi Zilli and newborn daughter Marina. James A. Tonkin was a member of a prominent Renton family; his father William was Mayor of Renton at the time. When the war started, thirty-four-year-old James took a job as a shipyard worker at Ames Shipbuilding in Seattle.<sup>15</sup> On October 15 Florence Guitteau’s sister Lucy saw him walk into Renton Hospital, suffering from Spanish influenza; “[he] died before 8 this morning,” Florence wrote in her diary on October 16.<sup>16</sup>

Because these men and women died in the prime of life, many left children who would never know their fathers. Carpenter

Continued on page 10



RenTeens Cassie Dozier, Oscar Locke and Jenny Loo at the Museum.



RenTeens speaking at the Renton Historical Society dinner auction.

# RENTEENS' REPORT

by Cassie Dozier, Oscar Locke & Jenny Loo

**W**e are the Renton History Museum Youth Advisory Council. We started earlier this year to have teens more involved in history and our community. In the beginning, some of us began as volunteers and other people joined later. Currently we are doing a blog called “Invisible Places” on Tumblr to increase awareness of the hidden historical sites of Renton (found at [renteens.tumblr.com](http://renteens.tumblr.com)).

We are thrilled to be a part of an amazing group of individuals who have inspired us to be better people. We will continue to do this because it is our legacy. Our future goals are to increase awareness of the Renton History Museum, have our own exhibit, and to be more involved with Renton School District and the community. Also, we want to improve how society looks at teenagers.

“My own personal experience with this museum has been overall well. I started late 2013 by finding volunteer opportunities online at the museum just to gain a few volunteer hours for my health class. After being a Greeter for a few weeks I learned of a new group being started at the Museum and I decided to go to the first meeting; I have found it to be very interesting, so I stayed. In the end I have improved my communication skills and I have learned more about the city I now live in and how it began.”

-Oscar Locke



RenTeens researching collection items for their Tumblr blog.

“In my freshman year in high school we had to volunteer 10 hours for a project in Health. My grandma suggested I volunteer down at the Museum because of my love of history. Since I began working I have loved it and will continue doing it until I graduate high school. The council has taught me to communicate better and has given me a love of helping my community.”

-Cassie Dozier

“The way the museum and RenTeens has affected me is by making me more aware of my community and the amazement of how people interact with each other. I found it through Mr. Smith, my Language Arts teacher, who collaborated with the museum 4 years in a row. I needed a way to be entertained by history more and it has helped me to reach out to people by making an impression on someone even if it is a small one.”

-Jenny Loo

Right now, we are planning our project for the 2014-2015 school year. We are considering a variety of topics, such as downtown vs. the Landing, diversities of schools, and many more ideas. We will keep you updated as we make more decisions about what we want to accomplish this year.



# MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

August 16, 2014 - November 15, 2014

Ellard Bartlett  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Kathleen DuBois Bohm  
Hazelle DuBois

Nancy Brenden  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Terri Briere  
Greg & Carrie Bergquist

William (Bill) Briere  
Lee & Judy Baker  
Jim & Kelly Beymer  
Larry & Rosemary Brester  
Ben & Geri Bush  
Nancy Carlson  
Randy & Cathy Corman  
Don & Loraine Custer  
Jay & Sheri Covington  
Denny & Bernie Dochnahl  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard  
Terry & Dennis Higashiyama  
Steve & Carla Hoffman  
Marcie Maxwell  
Kevin & Teresa Milosevich  
King Parker  
Mark & Kelly Peterson  
Renton Fire Department  
Alumni Association  
Joe & Loretta Starkovich  
Elizabeth Stewart  
George & Sue Terhaar

Chip & Carla Vincent  
Larry & Velma Warren  
Mutt & Tammy Willet

James P. Burch  
Helen D. Burch

Helen Burch  
Helen D. Burch

Virginia Shook Busato  
Hazelle DuBois

William (Bill) Byers  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard  
Richard & Judith Lucotch

Tim Chinn  
Hazelle DuBois

Robert (Bob) Ciotta  
Janet & Bill Belmondo

Mario & Victor Tonda  
Robert & Gilda Youngquist

Don (Buzz) Dana  
John & Marsha Nissen

Charles B. DuBois  
Hazelle DuBois

Elizabeth Swales DuBois  
Hazelle DuBois

Rena Ellis  
Mary Sutter

Gloria Gamba  
Elizabeth P. Stewart

Nona M. Garrison  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Myron "Mike" Leo Hackman  
Greg & Carrie Bergquist

Jack D. Holt  
Mary M. Sutter & Family

Keith Lankester  
Janet & Bill Belmondo

Melloy J. Larson  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Elaine Maas  
Sharon & Ron Clymer

Jennette (Culjak) McCurdy  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Patrick M. McLendon  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Tony Mola  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Marie F. Myers  
Greg & Carrie Bergquist

Edward L. Nilson  
Greg & Carrie Bergquist

Herman M. Nirschl  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Shirley Brooks Patterson  
Richard & Judith Lucotch

Betty Sipila  
Robert & Gilda Youngquist

Gladys L. Pierotti  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Michele Grace Salvatore  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard

Barbara Mercia Stevens  
Steve Sellers

Theodore F. Stevens  
Steve Sellers

Richard Stredicke  
Wendell & Cleo Forgaard  
Richard & Judith Lucotch

Bob Wicks  
Richard & Judith Lucotch

## MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF \$100 OR MORE

William (Bill) Briere  
Doug & Sonja Kyes  
Craig Magaw & Richard Holdway  
Esther Kooiman & Family  
Denis & Patty Law  
Jerry & Bonnie Rerecich  
Mark & Barbara Santos-Johnson  
Iwen Wang  
Leigh Anne Weller  
Gregg & Marianna Zimmerman

Keith Lankester  
Gary & Lorraine Myers,  
Don & Shirley Lindberg

Patrick (Pat) McLendon  
Don & Pearl Jacobson

## GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Brent & Laurie Beden  
Jim & Kelly Beymer  
Sandra Burkey  
Wanda Capellaro  
Agnes Ciotta  
Dan & Laura Clawson  
Jeffrey Conner  
Dennis Conte  
Denny Dochnahl  
Carren Donati  
Jaris English  
Louise George  
Merrie Hamlin  
Daniel Hammes  
Dan & Elizabeth Hemenway  
Ila Hemm  
Interlaken Trailblazers  
(Sharon Moats)  
Jean Hobart  
Karen Jones  
Lynne King  
Pauline Kirkman  
Barbara Mandic  
Stefanie McIrvin  
McLendon Hardware

(Linda Holmes)  
Kevin & Norma McQuiller  
Lisa Miller  
Lucille Miller  
Beth & Kevin Mitcham  
Meris Mullaley  
Barbara Nilson  
Ed & Meegan Prince  
Mark & Barbara Santos-Johnson  
Andy Sparks  
Marian Sutton  
Olympe Toman  
Rich Zwicker

## GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF \$100 OR MORE

Olga Azzola  
Jim & Charmaine Baker  
Paul & Cheryl Baker  
Harry & Janet Blencoe  
Dorlene Bressan  
Theresa & Stephen Clymer  
Terry Higashiyama  
Bob & Phyllis Hunt  
Don & Pearl Jacobson

Edgar & Leola Johnston  
JoAnne Matsumura  
McCorkle & Associates  
Sandra Meyer  
Ray Peretti  
Sandra Polley  
Mary Riley  
Alice Irene Stenstrom  
Greg & Kim Sweet  
Pam Teal  
Rich Wagner  
Iwen Wang

## IN-KIND DONATIONS

Hazen Highlander Chapter of  
the National Honor Society  
Renton Youth Council  
City of Renton Senior  
Activity Center  
Service Linen Supply

## GIFT MEMBERSHIP DONORS

Linnie Griffin

## NEW MEMBERS

William Kombol  
Beth & Kevin Mitcham family  
David Nelson  
Sally & Joe Steiner  
Joella (Jody) G. Yoder

## BENEFACTOR MEMBERS

David Thompson

## PATRON MEMBERS

Dan & Elizabeth Hemenway

## MATCHING GIFT CONTRIBUTION

Microsoft Matching Gift  
Program (matching volunteer  
hours of Steven Thomas)

Gus Gustafson died on October 24, 1918, leaving a barely pregnant wife behind. In June 1919 Olga Sipila Gustafson gave birth to their son Grant, only to see him die less than a year later. Edward McCaffrey was only two months old when his father died, leaving his mother to move her young family into her parents' home on Mill Street.<sup>17</sup> Cecelia Major was six years old when her father, John A. Carey Sr., died. He was in Spokane, interviewing for an accounting job with the railroad, when the Armistice that ended WWI was signed. "He went to the Armistice Day Parade," she remembered. "He came down with the flu and he died in Spokane," just as public health officials feared.<sup>18</sup>

By early December the autumn wave of influenza had passed; new cases and deaths in Renton slowed and people began to breathe a sigh of relief. But the respite did not last. The flu roared back and resources were stretched to their limit. When teamsters Gus Bishop and Pete Dullahant came down with the virus, the local paper warned customers that "the other fellows who handle coal will not be able to fill orders fast enough."<sup>19</sup> Teachers were ill and schools stayed closed into January. Dr. Bronson was suffering from his second bout of the virus in late December; by early January he was headed to California to recuperate, leaving Renton with one doctor.<sup>20</sup> As deaths began to mount again in January—Pacific Coast Railroad Co. bookkeeper Aaron Edwards, tailor Fred Roschkot, Father Thomas Deere from St. Anthony's—Dr. Dixon quarantined ill families in their homes.<sup>21</sup>

Some families were very hard-hit. Fred Elleg, a truck driver for Pacific Car & Foundry, died on January 8, 1919, two days before his sister, Louisa Ioppini, died. Brother and sister had a joint funeral at St. Anthony's Church, sharing pall-bearers. By January 10 grocery-owner Joseph Covey, brother-in-law of Fred and Louisa, was also sick with influenza, as were his pregnant wife Lena Elleg Covey and their two little sons. Fred's widow Charlotte was also down with the flu. Happily, Charlotte Elleg and the Coveys recovered, and Lena gave birth to Joseph F. Covey in February.<sup>22</sup>



Dr. Charles L. Dixon (right) and Jack Harries in Renton Hospital, ca. 1920. (RHM# 2000.127.8609)

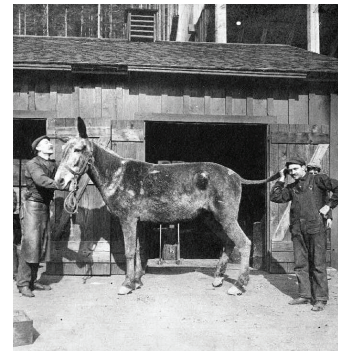
January 1919 represented the peak of new Spanish flu in Renton, with six or seven cases reported every week. Most of these sufferers recovered, however, and at the end of January the influenza began to release its terrible hold on Renton just as quickly as it had come. Schools finally re-opened on January 27, 1919 and the *Renton Bulletin* was able to report on January 31 that "the flu epidemic is declining and the ban is off, to the great relief of everybody."<sup>23</sup> The shocking sudden death of City Clerk Grant Bates in February of "acute end[ocarditis] caused by influenza" was a reminder of the flu's lingering effects, however.<sup>24</sup> In four months, seventy Renton residents had suffered from Spanish influenza—or 2% of the population—and twenty-two had died, a 31% death rate. 🍷

## ENDNOTES

- John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004, 2009), 171. Influenza cases in this article were compiled from Dr. Adolph Bronson's Call Book, 1905-1921 (#1988.133.001); Registration Ledger from Renton Hospital, 1911-1922 (#1988.027.240); and 1918 and 1919 editions of *Renton Bulletin*.
- Dr. Leonard Keens Hirshberg, "What Spanish Influenza Is," *Seattle Daily Times*, 25 September 1918, p.5.
- "Draft Held Up by Spanish Influenza," *Seattle Daily Times*, 27 September 1918, p.2.
- Charles Tamborini Diary, 30 September 1918 (Collection of the Renton History Museum, #1987.043.002).
- "State to Follow Closing Orders," *Seattle Daily Times*, 7 October 1918, p.4; "Six Deaths from Influenza in Day," *Seattle Daily Times*, 10 October 1918, p.14.
- Uncle Sam's Advice on Flu," *Renton Bulletin*, 27 October 1918, p.1.
- "Uncle Sam's Advice on Flu," *Renton Bulletin*, 27 October 1918, p.1.
- Anne Marie Bressan Rossman Oral History, 24 May 2002, p.2 (Collection of the Renton History Museum); John W. Dobson Oral History, 30 August 1999, p.8 (Collection of the Renton History Museum, #1999.129.003).
- Jessie Tulloch Oral History, 11 October 1987, p.17 (Collection of the Renton History Museum, #1987.124.006).
- "Seattle Puts Ban on Big Church Weddings," *Seattle Daily Times*, 7 October 1918, p.4; "Masked Against Influenza Spread," *Seattle Daily Times*, 10 October 1918, p.14; "Camp Lewis Men Barred from City," *Seattle Daily Times*, 10 October 1918, p.14; "Seattle Ordered to Wear Masks to Prevent Mallady," *Seattle Daily Times*, 28 October 1918, p.1; Jessie Tulloch Oral History, 11 October 1987, p.17 (Collection of the Renton History Museum, #1987.124.006).
- Florence Guitteau Diary, 16 October 2014, p.94 (Collection of the Renton History Museum, #2014.023.004). Like many Americans, Florence wondered whether the Spanish flu was a deliberate attempt by the Central Powers to weaken the Allies.
- "Local News," *Renton Bulletin*, 18 October 1918, p.3.

- "Local News," *Renton Bulletin*, 18 October 1918, p.3.
- "A Navy Boy Passed Away," *Renton Bulletin*, 11 October 1918, p.1.
- Under "Deaths," *Renton Bulletin*, 18 October 1918, p.1. Other early deaths included Father Ailbe Heelan, pastor at St. Anthony's Church; twenty-year old Dennis Hogan; and concrete worker Simon M. Simonsen, all reported on 18 October 1918.
- Florence Guitteau Diary, 16 October 2014, p.94-95 (Collection of the Renton History Museum, #2014.023.004). Other victims in Renton included Gustaf Waldemar Gustafson (24 October 1918), Winifred Kline (24 October 1918), Eric Franz Hyppa (21 November 1918), and John Kollus (27 November 1918).
- Edward McCaffrey and George Pasco Oral History, 19 January 1989, p.1 (Collection of the Renton History Museum).
- Cecelia Major Oral History, 1 October 1988, p.2 (Collection of the Renton History Museum).
- "Local News," *Renton Bulletin*, 10 January 1919, p.3.
- "Local News," *Renton Bulletin*, 20 December 1918, p.3; "Local News," *Renton Bulletin*, 10 January 1919, p.3.
- "Deaths," *Renton Bulletin*, 20 December 1918, p.1; "Fred Roschkot Has Gone," *Renton Bulletin*, 10 January 1919, p.1; "Funerals: Rev. Thos. J. Deere," *Renton Bulletin*, 17 January 1919, p.1; "Flu Ban on in Renton," *Renton Bulletin*, 17 January 1919, p.3.
- "Local Notes," *Renton Bulletin*, 10 January 1919, p.3; "Brother and Sister Fred Elleg and Mrs. Ioppini," *Renton Bulletin*, 17 January 1919, p.1.
- "Local News," *Renton Bulletin*, 24 January 1919, p.3; "Local News" *Renton Bulletin*, 31 January 1919, p.3.
- Dr. Bronson's Call Book, 8 February 1919, p.63; "Funeral of City Clerk Grant Bates Was Held at M. E. Church Last Tuesday," *Renton Bulletin*, 14 February 1919, p.1.





# FURRY FRIENDS PET PHOTO CONTEST

**P**et Photo Contest: Here's your chance to be featured in an upcoming exhibit! The Museum invites you to submit photos of you with your pets to be considered for display in our upcoming *Furry Friends* exhibit. Here's how to enter:

1. Check our Facebook page for a selection of photos of historic Rentonites with their dogs, cats, and other animal companions.
2. Select a photo and recreate it with your furry friends.
3. Submit the digital photo file to the Museum by January 15, 2015 (nothing smaller than 1 MB).

Your photo may be one of a select few featured in the exhibit alongside their historical inspiration!

Deadline for submissions

# JANUARY 15

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please select a membership level:

### Basic memberships

- Individual \$30
- Student/Senior \$20
- Family \$40

### Sustaining memberships

- Benefactor \$75
- Patron \$150
- Business/Corporate \$175
- Life membership \$750

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation! Your donations help us provide new exhibits and exciting programs.

Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment information

Visa or MC #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Renton Historical Society.



Renton Historical Society  
235 Mill Avenue South  
Renton, WA 98057

Phone: 425.255.2330

Fax: 425.255.1570

Email: [estewart@rentonwa.gov](mailto:estewart@rentonwa.gov)  
[rentonwa.gov/rentonhistorymuseum](http://rentonwa.gov/rentonhistorymuseum)



RENTON HISTORY MUSEUM  
235 Mill Ave. S  
Renton, WA 98057



Holiday postcard mailed from Bremerton to Mattie (Thompson) Jennings, 1920. (RHM# 1981.111.019)