

Ouvre's River:

A Hudson's Bay Company Venture to the Duwamish in 1838

Written and Illustrated By: Steve A. Anderson

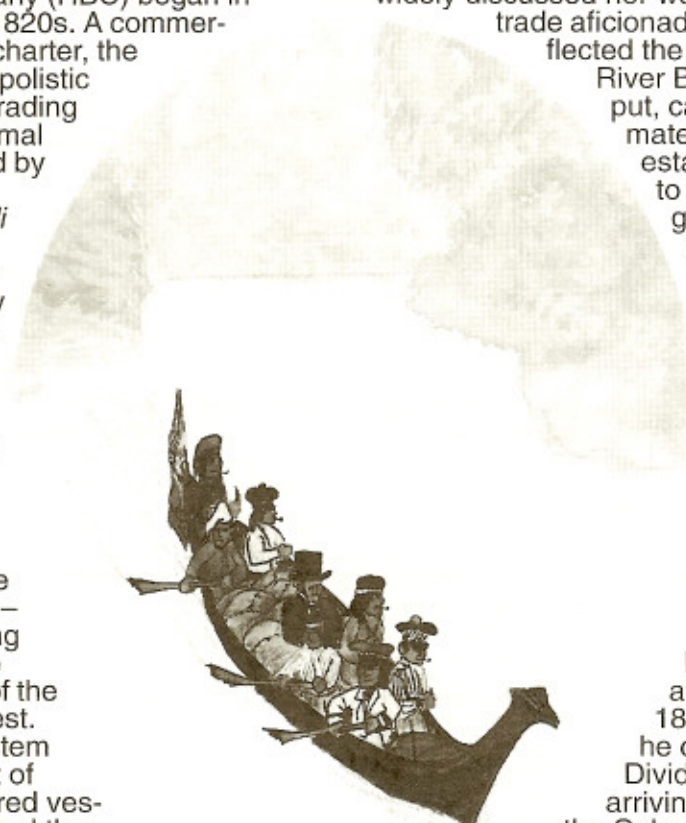
Foreword

Harvesting of the Pacific Northwest's fur resources by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) began in earnest around the middle 1820s. A commercial juggernaut with a royal charter, the HBC approached this monopolistic endeavor by importing and trading manufactured goods for animal pelts that had been gathered by Native Americans. The Company's *modus operandi* drew upon land and water based collecting systems – each staunchly promoted by the Columbia Department's Chief Factor John McLoughlin at Fort Vancouver and the Company's North American Governor - Sir George Simpson.¹

McLoughlin's land based trading system depended heavily on Indian travel to the Company's establishments – forts and trading posts strung tactically along the coastline and throughout the interior of the present day Pacific Northwest. Simpson's water based system consisted primarily of a fleet of sturdy steam and sail powered vessels. The *Steamer Beaver* and the *Schooner Cadboro* were just two of the Company's vessels that probed the inlets and bays of the Puget Sound in search of Indians willing to trade. And trade they did, bringing animal skins, meat, baskets, hyqua (dentalium shells), shellfish, whale oil, mats or any other object of great or little value to the ship's decks and trade shop counters with the hope of besting their Euro-American counterparts. A plethora of unique, manufactured items awaited their selection. The choices ranged from flintlock trade guns, powder and shot, to steel files, iron awls and axes, knives and traps, brass ball buttons, mirrors, woven yard goods, silk ribbon, wool blankets, ceramic dinner wares, hair combs and tobacco, just to name a few.²

Aside from these two modes of trade, another form was also practiced by the HBC. Although neither widely discussed nor well known amongst many fur trade aficionados, "itinerate" trading, reflected the methods used by the Snake River Brigades of the 1820s.³ Simply put, canoes packed with trading material supplied by a nearby HBC establishment, were dispatched to tribal centers with the intent of gleaning every available fur from those residing within. At the helm of these canoes would be one or two skilled traders/interpreters whose only job was to return home with a dugout stuffed with skins. Fort Nisqually, an HBC post on lower Puget Sound built in 1833, was blessed early on with the presence of just such a man - Jean Baptiste Ouvre.

Born around 1791 in Montreal, Jean Baptiste Ouvre joined Wilson Price Hunt's Pacific Fur Company at Mackinac in early August 1810. As a member of that party, he crossed over the Continental Divide in late summer 1811, arriving at Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River by mid-February, 1812. When the North West Company absorbed the Pacific Fur Company in 1813, Ouvre entered the service of the latter, working within the Columbia Department until it was in turn taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821.⁴ By 1838, Ouvre's proficiency as a trader/hunter as well as his skill as an interpreter with Indians was well established within the HBC. While engaged as a fur trader and interpreter at Fort Nisqually, his competence as an "itinerate" trader was tested across the waters of Puget Sound. On one canoe trip in 1833 with Company physician Dr. William Tolmie, Ouvre





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Steve A. Anderson, Managing Editor,
Susie Bressan, Graphic Design & Layout
Louise George, Copy Editor
Daisy Ward, Text Input, Copy Editor
Deborah Willard & Karl Hurst
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Contributing Authors

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Renton Historical Museum
235 Mill Avenue South
Renton, WA 98055-2133
Phone: 425.255.2330
FAX: 425.255.1570

Email: saanderson@ci.renton.wa.us



This quarterly publication is mailed to all members of the Renton Historical Society as a membership benefit. Manuscripts submitted for future articles about Renton history are welcomed from all sources. Authors are responsible for the accuracy and content of their submissions.



President's Report

By Barb Horton, Co-President

As the holidays draw near, it's important to remember the contributions of everyone who makes our mission to provide the finest heritage services possible. Here are some highlights of some of the contributions from both City and Society.

I would like to recognize and thank the RHS Board of Trustees for their devoted attention to the business details that must be managed in order to provide resources to meet the Society's mission. The Trustees participate in monthly Board meetings to conduct the Society's business and they also chair the Committees that are the engine behind the heritage and museum services that we provide. The business part isn't always the most fun part of what must be done, but when it's done well, the whole organization thrives!

The Executive Committee has been coordinating with the City of Renton on many important issues. One of the most important to the long-term health of the Renton Historical Society is its relationship with the City of Renton, which has been undocumented. The City has recognized the need for documented roles and responsibilities between our two organizations and has been working with the RHS Executive Committee to draft an agreement. As of this printing of the RHS Quarterly, this document is still in the draft state. We are working on it consistently and anticipate positive news to report in the next edition.

Another critical issue to the Society is storage for our artifact collection. The City of Renton has helped us again by providing additional storage space. The City of Renton provides much support for the long-term maintenance and storage of the Society's artifacts, as a part of our partnership to provide heritage services to our community. Without the support of the City of Renton, we would not have the fine Museum or staff that we have today.

We are proud to announce that the Budget Committee has met and determined that we have enough revenue available to continue to pay for 2 employees with RHS funding, for the positions of Volunteer Coordinator and Collections Manager. We have also budgeted for a summer intern to come in next year to help us to accession more artifacts from the Custer Estate. My thanks to our Treasurer, Jennifer Sharp; to our Endowment Committee Chair, Ken Becker; and to all those who work with these knowledgeable managers to make our finances work so well!

Most of all, we appreciate our volunteers! Without the consistent and devoted service that the RHS volunteers provide to our community, we could not provide the Museum services that we have today.

Please consider an RHS membership as a gift opportunity for family and friends during the upcoming holidays. It's a gift that keeps on giving, to both your loved ones and to your community.

Happy Holidays!

The Renton Historical Society Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., at either the Renton Community Center or the Renton Historical Museum. Please call the museum for meeting locations on the following dates: December 23rd, January 22nd, February 26th, March 26th, and April 23rd.

Public hours for the Renton Historical Museum are Tuesday - Friday, 12:00 to 4:00pm Saturday, 10:00am to 4:00pm and by appointment for archival and photographic research purposes Wednesday through Fridays, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Admission: \$3 per adult, \$1 per child (ages 8 - 16) and Renton Historical Society members are always free. Free days: first Wednesday and third Saturday of the month.

Endowment Committee Report

The Endowment Committee met on the 1st of November with the Chair, Ken Becker presiding and committee members Allan Unbedacht, Naomi Mathisen, Randy Rockhill, Steve Anderson, and Society Treasurer Jennifer Sharp, attending – members Pat Auten and David Gilbert were excused. It was reported that the fund rested at \$177,934 on September 30th. Currently 58% resides in fixed income investments and 42% is resides within equity investments. The ratio changed to a large extent because some of the Endowment's mutual fund holdings were in transition at the end of the quarter.

The Committee invited Dan Foley, the local Edward Jones Investment Representative to provide his professional opinion of the fund's current holdings in exchange for putting his Company's logo in the RHQuarterly. Foley presented several different investment strategies to the Committee. Mr. Foley then fielded a number of questions from the Committee's members, all of who appreciated his opinions on the Endowment's investments.

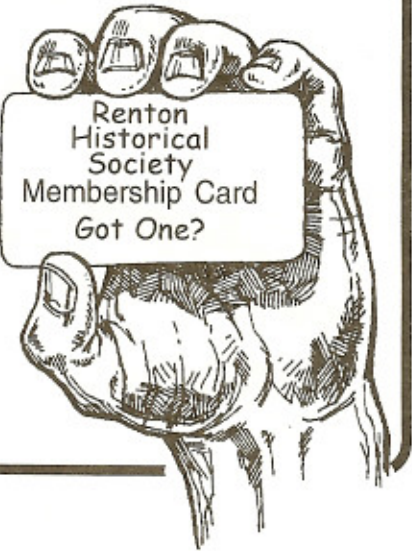
Asset reallocations: No asset reallocations were made this quarter.

As their terms end in December, this was the last committee meeting for Randy Rockhill and Naomi Mathisen. Chair Ken Becker thanked both for their commitment to the Endowment program, as both members have been on board since the fund's inception (January 1997). As there were no other investment decisions to be made, the meeting adjourned. The committee meets quarterly, with the next meeting on January 29th, 2003.

All memorials, life membership dues and directed gifts go toward the fund's working capital. All gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law. Consult your tax advisor. Only the interest generated by these invested funds will be used as sustained support to the Renton Historical Society. Please call 425/255-2330 for more information, or email at saanderson@ci.renton.wa.us for more information regarding including the Renton Historical Society in your living will or bequest.

Membership Dues

The past few years dues renewal forms have been included in the November Quarterly. So that the renewal notices do not get laid aside with your reading materials, we are mailing them separately this year. Your continued support of the Renton Historical Society and Museum is much appreciated.



Thank You To Our Business Donors

It has been a very busy time for the staff at the museum. This quarter, meetings, activities, tours and daily functions have been supported by several businesses, which we would like to recognize within this column.

Firstly, advice and timely suggestions concerning the Society's Endowment Program's direction and current status was provided by the downtown Renton's **Edward Jones Investment Representative Dan Foley**, who came to the October meeting of the Endowment Committee and spoke to the group. Dan can be reached at www.edwardjones.com or at his cell phone, 206/696-6107. Thanks Dan!

Edward Jones

kinko's

Secondly, a significant in kind contribution was received this past quarter from **Sean Dayment, Manager of Kinko's Tukwila Sign and Banner Center**, who donated a banner that was used during the Renton Museum Remembers September 11th Commemoration Event. Sean can be reached at amt5173@kinkos.com or by phone at 206/244-8884. Thanks Sean!

And finally, this past quarter the museum received an in kind contribution from **Charles Mansfield of Charlie's Appliance Install**, who was referred to us by **Renton City Councilman King Parker** - wherein Charlie and his son-in-law installed the nearly new dishwashing machine donated last year by Paul and Jane Bentley. Charlie can be reached at charlieM35@iwon.com or 206/818-0766. Thanks Charlie (and King too)!

Receiving these kinds of in kind gifts benefits the museum, which can save the money not spent on these projects for direct mission related purposes. We also issue in kind forms (when applicable) so that the donors can apply their gift towards a tax break when the IRS comes knocking. Thank you to all the folks listed above and to others who have given of their time, talents and possessions to make Renton's historical museum one of the best in the state.

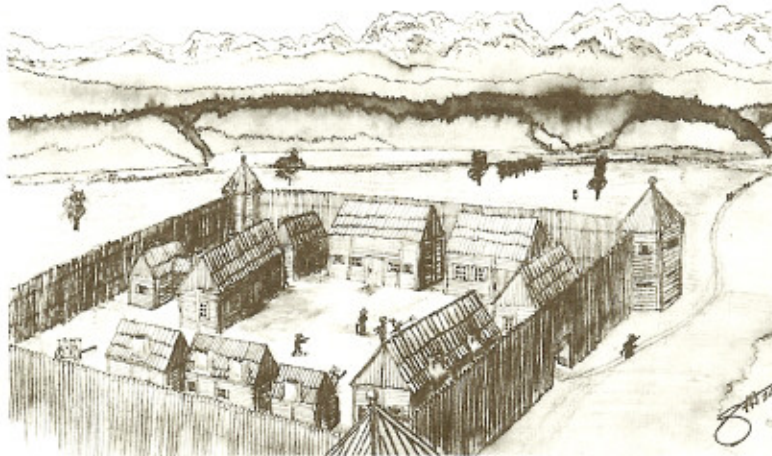
pointed out a river that he had the temerity (and perhaps the privilege) to name after himself . . . a twisting, convoluted drainage flowing into Elliot Bay - known today as the Duwamish.⁵

It is highly probable that a skilled hunter and trader like Ouvre practiced the Company's trading policies religiously, which would have most certainly led to his full exploration of the Duwamish River watershed.⁶ Here it is believed that Ouvre met that region's inhabitants a dozen or so years prior to 1838 - the year depicted in the following narrative. Further, it is held that Ouvre's employment at Fort Nisqually fostered ongoing relationships with several leading Duwamish elders and traders.

A Leap of Faith

To be sure, shedding light on an 1838 HBC "itinerate" trading expedition to the Duwamish requires a leap of faith on behalf of the reader. You see, Jean Baptiste Ouvre was illiterate, so no written record of his travels exists. Further, contemporary accounts from this period give little testimony to the intimate details of this particular foray to the Duwamish in the spring of 1838. Existing documentation provides cultural data and a chronological framework for the trip,⁷ but in many cases the personal perspective is left wanting. This is an ingredient that might be helpful if the reader is encountering the Duwamish culture or the operations of the Hudson's Bay Company for the very first time.

So, it was determined that a narrative in journal form would best create that perspective, reveal the character of the participants and depict the nature of the culture they encountered. To do that, the narration required the services of a fictionalized journalist - apprentice clerk Colin MacKenzie. While Colin is fictitious, it is important to know that a large percentage of his observations are not - and that as the narrator he has limitations.⁸ Clerks employed by the HBC did not typically receive education or training involving ethnology, natural sciences or botany. Given these parameters, Mr. MacKenzie's ability to scientifically describe such phenomena remains limited to his own personal experience or that of his illiterate companion, Jean Baptiste Ouvre.⁹ It bears repeating that as you read Mr. MacKenzie's narrative (which like private journals of this period lacks most pronouns) remember that the various places he visits really did exist at that time and the activities he describes actually took place many times throughout the first half of the 19th Century.



As the journal opens, Chief Factor John McLoughlin's counterpart at Vancouver, Chief Factor James Douglas, has sent our young apprentice clerk northward in the spring of 1838 with a "packet" of mail - and as revealed in his private notes, young MacKenzie is not pleased about it. His eventual travel to the Duwamish village of "tu-hu-DEE-du" or "little river" a center of trade and commerce and located just southwest of

the downtown Fred Meyer store within Renton, Washington - quickly ensues.¹⁰ Here then is Mr. Colin MacKenzie's private journal, beginning with his arrival at Fort Nisqually.

The MacKenzie Journal - 1938

Friday, June 8th. Grand Mound Prairie.¹¹ Fair weather prevails as camp broke early - the party continuing northward led by its fatuous members viz., an Iroquois,¹² an Orkneyman¹³ and two Kanakas¹⁴ who plodded onward with the fords of the Deschutes and Nisqually Rivers providing little resistance. The "Black Douglas" must surely be chortling aloud - occupying this clerk on such a fool's errand. Uneventfully attained Nisqually astride an unremarkable mount by nightfall. Delivered the mails to Mr. Kittson,¹⁵ a sharp, dapper, short tempered, petulant little fellow who now manages the establishment.¹⁶ After getting situated in his dwelling, forthwith joined Mr. K and Charles Humphreys, Master of the Company's ship *Columbia*¹⁷ - who is direct from London, for supper. He brings the news that King William IV died last February and Queen Victoria is on the throne. From the Sandwich Islands, learned that Mr. Benjamin McKenzie died in December at Washam. Such passages have prompted advancements for Chief Trader Black as Factor and Mr. Donald Manson as Chief Trader. A late toast for absent friends raised by Mr. Kittson.

Saturday, June 9. Fort Nisqually. Weather as yesterday. Awoke amidst the lamentable deportment and clamor evoked by the denizens of this place. Breakfasted with Mr. Kittson wherein he reported that one of Mr. Douglas's letters indicates that this clerk's services are to be applied towards inventorying the *Columbia's* stores and other such duties at Nisqually for a term of two weeks - then return to Vancouver. The audacity of that old Scot to leave me as such uninformed as to his plans! The future being preordained, inquiries were made as to what other duties might lay ahead. Mr. Kittson, noting disappointment, indicated that a servant named Jean Baptiste Ouvre had recently been sanctioned to visit a prominent Indian village situated in close proximity to the Puyallup, Snoqualmish and Suquamish tribes. Mr. K's inclination to enlist this clerk's services in that venture was well met - finding it far more engaging than

dealing with the flotsam and jetsam in the *Columbia's* hold. Afternoon. A measure of anticipation built throughout the day while working in the trade shop sorting skins, putting up the furs into packs and conducting the trade. Closely observed Ouvre conducting business with the fort's Indians. He is an accomplished trader possessing an excellent command of Chinook Jargon – a vile amalgam of English, French and the Chinook gibberish.¹⁸ The man possesses ability of measure within this capacity. Little time was available for idle talk - did not press Ouvre for details relative to the upcoming expedition. Took supper once again with Mr. K and Captain Humphreys.

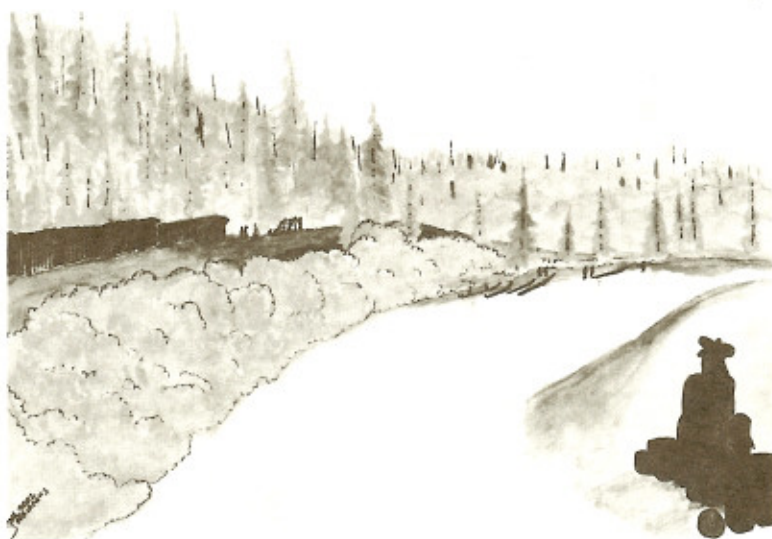
Sunday, June 10. Weather as yesterday. Following divine services conducted by Mr. Kittson - attended by all true believers and a few curious Indians - sought Ouvre's company in order to become acquainted with his plans. Ouvre's dwelling was populated by himself, Madame Ouvre (Angeline), their youngest daughter Marianne, and two older children, Louise and Therese.¹⁹ Upon inquiry, Ouvre revealed that he had gathered a week's worth of provisions - all of which will be loaded into a large canoe beached below the roadstead at sunrise.²⁰ Then, coursing northward where providence has awarded his efforts previously, he intends to trade the entire lot. At least five men will be needed to propel the high prowed dugout canoe – a selection that Ouvre assures will be completed by nightfall. Considering these preparations satisfactory joined the Kittson's in the afternoon for a picnic, including recreational pursuits of fishing at the lake and a horseback ride through the open country.

Monday, June 11.²¹ Fair weather. Breakfasted early with Mr. K., whom we bid adieu amidst an outgoing tide in a deep drafted Nootkan style dugout. Ouvre has secured our party, which consists of himself, John Bull, Abraham Lepain and three of the servants who crossed the portage with me viz., the Orkneyman and the two Sandwich Islanders. La-ha-let, a physically large and imposing headman amongst the Nisquallys, has also joined our party.²² Upon departure, Ouvre commenced chanting a disconsolate aria regarding the murderous wars of the HBC & Northwest Company. This incipient dissonance continued without cessation - broken only by his haranguing of the Kanakas, who use the paddles more as props than agents of movement. Ouvre's aspiration to trade with every beach camp and waterborne party slowed our progress. By two o'clock traversed the mouth of the Puyallup Bay – with Mt. Rainier rising graciously on the horizon. Viewed Ouvre's "Land of Promise" about six miles to the northward.²³ Tarrying occasional to conduct trade with passersby's, a decidedly measured pace was maintained while navi-

gating northward along the easterly shores of Puget's Sound. Following several hours of steady paddling, broached "the lip,"²⁴ and entered a large bay on Admiralty Inlet, approximately six miles wide and perhaps three long into which Ouvre's River flows. Desolate and windswept, this point of land was occupied by an Indian burial ground, so moved on to a village called "little prairies" near the mouth of the river.²⁵ The Indians here are miserably poor and destitute of firearms.²⁶ A preponderance of "shovel nosed" dugouts could be seen strung along the shoreline, these being lower to the water than our means of conveyance. Left the bay and ascended the river – which is about the size of the Cowlitz. Pitched tents on dry ground near several abandoned huts. At supper learned that the D'wabsch Indians²⁷ exercise a degree of economic influence over the region and are allied to the Suquamish.²⁸ Clear, fine weather continues.

Tuesday, June 12. Though Ouvre's breakfast paled significantly to those at Vancouver – consumed everything, then proceeded southward through a vast, open marshy floodplain, towards the primary trading site of the D'wabsch or "inside people" - a name derived from their proximity to the rivers and the lands of this place.²⁹ The Kanakas continued their incessant complaining while applying little effort to the paddles. The twisting tributary meandered hither and yon - with duck snares presenting themselves occasionally crossing sloughs.³⁰ Ascending against a moderate current, the wide flood plain gradually narrowed - then surrendered to a canyon championed by steep, tree-covered ridges. Passing through a rock gorge, the compression created rapids, which offered very fine opportunities for mill privileges.³¹ Ouvre expressed annoyance with the canoe's awkward performance that, unlike the shovel nosed dugouts, was constrained by shallows and partially submerged trees. Many Indian canoes could be seen made fast to the bank with bindings to overhanging willow trees. Long houses frequented the shoreline near the confluence of the "Mox La Push,"³² a stream with an average width of about twenty yards. Noon. Ran vessel aground and dined on shore, with victuals being obtained from the inhabitants of this soggy juncture. Pushed on towards what Ouvre declared as the "*Coeur d' la D'wabsch*", a well-populated village

resplendent with beaver, otter and wolf skins, horses, and Indian traders familiar to him. Thereannant, came upon an impressive village³³ referred to as "little river," wherein La-ha-let and Ouvre quickly engaged the local headman 'Kwasch-chin,³⁴ who will host the party. Presented the obligatory gifts of tobacco, a new pipe and some red baize.³⁵



(continued on page 6)



Received quarters in a smoky but not altogether unpleasant lodge from the D'wabsch chief – from whom Ouvre learned that a large gathering or “sing gamble” was in progress farther up another nearby river. The new surroundings revealed a fresh water spring and numerous cultivated gardens nestled between several large long houses. A few beaver skins traded by Ouvre. About dusk a chorus of frogs erupted to the southeast of the village.³⁶ Weather as yesterday.

Wednesday, June 13. No change in the weather. Ouvre's desire to visit the gambling site led to the division of the party, sending Bull, Lepain and the Kanakas packing southward seeking trade with the Indians at Stuck.³⁷ After gleaning several more skins in the immediate neighborhood, settled into a smaller dugout and ventured out with Ouvre, La-ha-let, the Orkneyman and one of the Kwash-chin's slaves. Apparently at times (tho' not at the present) this river is fairly choked with smelt or salmon.³⁸ Cattails, ducks and geese are in great abundance near the swampy marsh bordering a large lake to the north. Long houses, both occupied and abandoned presented themselves successively. Met the confluence of the “Duw” river, continued easterly for nearly an hour – wherein our ears were met with the revelry generated by several hundred inveterate Indian gamblers, the whole raucous affair having begun the evening of the 11th Instant.³⁹ Entering the gambling house, observed a large fire dividing the opposing tribes immersed in this great event – the right occupied by D'wabsch and the left with Puyallups. Resembling a highly embellished “shell game” proffered by Londonderry hucksters the match ensued thusly: the D'wabsch dealer called out:

*“Oct so? Oct so? Oct so. Cust avis?
Bee! Bee! Bee! Ah! Ah? A, A, A?
Wa-ho! Le, Le, Lo.”*

Then, the dealer began by making unnatural hand movements involved gaming chips and cedar bark

pulp. Hypnotic drums then began beating, with the entire entourage joining in, their bodies swaying in rhythm over and over, keeping time with the drums – the colored chips being hidden, then chosen by the opposing tribe.⁴⁰ With roles reversed, the Puyallups appeared more spirited in song than the D'wabsch. Ouvre successfully gleaned but a meager number of pelts. Discovered La-ha-let outside the gambling house in a great state of agitation, having witnessed the arrival of several Snoqualmish slave traders – who were in the process of offering up a young female relation known to him. La-ha-let's agitation was great, tho' thought little of the occurrence. Departed the gambling conclave in full knowledge that each side had potentially forfeited entire inheritances.⁴¹ Returned to Kwash-chin's village late in the afternoon. The Snoqualmish⁴² presence in the

area brings agitation to the Indians of this place as well. Slept with loaded pistols and braced for trouble. Cloudy with frogs croaking to the southeast once again.

Thursday, June 14. Weather continued cloudy and a little rain. The southern trading party's non-arrival at this place is of concern. Snoqualmish Indians have come to this village – continuing with their commerce in human chattel, tho' the D'wabsch here seem more at ease with their sustained presence. The old Nisqually chief has solicited Ouvre's good graces in providing trading stock to secure his relation's freedom. As the only gentleman on this expedition, Ouvre has in turn solicited me, before goods are encumbered for the trade. La-ha-let's agitation proliferated greatly as the Snoqualmish purposely mistreated their slaves to fetch attention and advance their bounty. Afternoon. Klickitats arrived with a herd of nearly wild horses. Now supported by assurances that Mr. Kittson would not find the action presumptuous and that Ouvre would encumber no more of the Company goods than was absolutely necessary, approved of a plan to free La-ha-let's relation. At this juncture, the insipid haggling began in earnest. Towards evening, while ensconced around a large fire, La-ha-let, Ouvre and the Snoqualmish trader agreed to continue negotiations on the 'morrow, as a mutually agreed upon price was not forthcoming. Following supper, the southern trading party arrived - having lost their way. They also experienced difficulties in exacting skins from the Indians. Loud arguments between the Klickitat horse traders and the Snoqualmish nearly obscured the frog chorus, which began early. Slept better knowing that our contingent's full strength was once again consolidated.

Friday, June 15. Weather as yesterday. Forenoon. Awoke to find La-ha-let and Ouvre already engaged in further negotiations for the release the young female slave. Knowledgeable of the fact that precious time was slipping away, questioned Ouvre and learned that the Snoqualmish trader coveted my pocket watch,

which, in addition to five 3½-point blankets would secure the slave's release. As Ouvre's talents are better spent on negotiating for furs, gave up the timepiece. Aside from La-ha-let's joy, observed with melancholy the unclaimed slaves who now face prolonged captivity. The availability of peltries appears scarce at this juncture, so the reduced trading stock in blankets should have no consequence. Afternoon. Departure was delayed by a request from Kwasch-chin and his three sons to attend a large feast and gathering in his dwelling. Observed a group of Indians preparing salmon for the meal – each fish bearing the weight equal to or more than one of Ouvre's daughters. According to the old French Canadian, these Indians remove the heart of the first salmon caught each season for fear that it might be eaten by a dog – which, as they believe, would end the salmon season. A stick stuck unceremoniously in the ground near the fire provides support to cook the salmon – clamshells lying beneath to catch the oil that flows almost in a stream. An occasional deer, elk, beaver, duck, or other such waterfowl also graces their table. Vegetables resembling parsley, celery, yam, artichoke and 'taties are present. Shellfish are also easily obtained. Yesterday, witnessed the root of cattail being eaten raw by a young boy. Berries - whole, dried, mealy or crushed and doused in oil, regularly present themselves.⁴³ Some are dried and pressed into five or six pound cakes and stored for later use. A form of crabapple is also eaten.⁴⁴ Ouvre indicated that these gatherings sometimes provide an opportunity for the host to divest himself of his worldly possessions, tho' the evening's gathering held no such purpose.⁴⁵ During the meal, an old Indian rose and bespoke a tribal legend, with Ouvre translating, viz.,

"Long before the white traders came, when the dense forests were everywhere, about thirty women and girls were picking berries near this village. Old and young, they picked away, chatting and laughing. But one girl was silent. She told the others that she had a foreboding of evil. That evening she would take no food convinced that 'something terrible is going to befall.' But they only laughed and paid no heed. That night the maiden and a friend lay down to sleep, apart from the other women, near some trees. The girl lay awake and listened during the long hours. Suddenly she heard a rustling in the underbrush. She shook her companion and they quickly took refuge in a tree. Then they heard snarling and tearing sounds amidst the screams of the awakened women. It was a pack of hungry timber wolves. All night the two girls remained shivering in the branches. When morning came the wolves had gone and only bones and torn clothing remained of the girls' companions."⁴⁶

La-ha-let's relative was now free. There existed a growing distance separating this place from the recently departed Snoqualmish traders. These two facts helped to temper the old Indian's story, which



weighed heavily on the mind. Eventually found sleep with the frog symphony in full orchestration.

Saturday, June 16. Arose early to Ouvre's prodding's – therein learned via Indian intelligence that several reports of cannon had been heard on Puget's Sound - a vessel may be near.⁴⁷ From the same source, learned that the sing gamble had concluded in a draw, leaving many furs available to trade.⁴⁸ The party's return to Nisqually again delayed in order to allow Ouvre, Bull, Lepain and the Kanakas to visit the gambling site in the large canoe – being ever hopeful that the fur returns would increase exponentially with this opportunity. Spent the day journalizing and walking in the vicinity of this place, much of which is densely populated with large trees, swamps and marshy areas. Viewed La-ha-let comforting his reclaimed female relation. Towards dusk, the trading party returned - Ouvre succeeded in securing a dozen or so beaver skins, tho' greater expectations had been held. Spent a last night in the long house. The weather cloudy and some rain fell.

Sunday, June 17. Cloudy morning. Initiated departure before noon, bidding Kwasch-chin and his family adieu. Tho' Ouvre argued that no movement occurs on the Sabbath, a majority of the party insisted that we leave. Navigated the currents of Mox La Push and then northwesterly on Ouvre's River. Spent the greater part of the afternoon moving downstream, tho' our travel was impeded by the dugout's cumbersome performance and Ouvre's futile attempts to trade for more furs. The smooth waters and current of the river immediately gave way to small swells and buffeting winds once we rounded the "lip." Prevailing southwesterlies continued hampering navigation of Puget's Sound, slowing progress to a near stand still. Camped on the leeward side of Vashon's Island roughly a mile from its northern most landfall. Explored the beaches and woodlands of this Island retreat for the course of the day. The beach fire

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attracted Suquamish traders who visited and added to our otter skins by three. Several fair showers fell in course of the day.

Monday, June 18. Cloudy. Seeking additional skins, Ouvre decided to explore the windward side of the Island and the western mainland shores of Puget's Sound. Promising venues included every inlet and harbor along the way – tho' little trade was accomplished by the act. Ouvre is explicitly disappointed with the fruits of our labors and equally so with the deportment of the Kanakas. This has diminished the delight of freeing La-ha-let's female relation – who remains huddled under a blanket amidships. The Kanakas, who frequently make sundry demands on Ouvre and others in the canoe, provide an irritating cadence to the travel that makes reading and journalizing difficult at best. Found refuge for setting up the tents in a small closed harbour near the narrows.⁴⁹ Some showers in course of the day.

Tuesday, June 19. Fair weather. The party has decided that it would be best to return to Nisqually. Set off following breakfast to obtain that objective. Noon. Beached our craft below the Nisqually roadstead. The expedition has proffered only 31 large beaver, one small beaver and seven otters, a meager lot for the distance traveled. Mr. Kittson (tho' understanding of our actions regarding La-ha-let's relation) indicated that Ouvre must pay for the Company's property used in the trade and further, that compensation for the pocket watch will not be forthcoming. In addition, this clerk's stay in this neighborhood is to end – returning to Vancouver with the next overland party. The Kanakas also received a verbal thrashing from Mr. K, who found their services entirely inadequate. La-ha-let's assurance that the debt will not go unsatisfied bore little comfort to those scrutinized by Mr. K's highly provoked disposition.

Wednesday, June 20. Cloudy with clearing weather. Jean Baptiste Ouvre and party (Andre' St. Martin and Louis Latour in lieu of two lazy Kanakas) off again up Puget Sound. Fear that the presumptions made about the Nisqually maiden's purchase have perhaps been done in error – as Mr. K's anger over the lost blankets and poor fur returns continued throughout the day and evening. Stayed much to myself today in the stores inventorying the *Columbia's* goods, with the hopes of avoiding any further unpleasanties with my host.

Thursday, June 21. Cloudy weather. Remained sequestered in the baling room of the fort's trade shop for the entirety of the day - packing and unpacking various bales of furs. Mr. Kittson indicated at supper that he intends to send the entire lot of Vancouver servants packing on the 'morrow if Ouvre's second voyage proves unsuccessful. La-ha-let's compensation for the pocket watch is yet forthcoming. Slept uneasily.

Friday, June 22. Forenoon. Ouvre's arrival with one beaver skin sealed our fate, as Mr. Kittson announced to the assembled denizens that any further expeditions would be "useless." After packing and provisioning, the overland party was turned out at 4 o'clock and sent south back to the Cowlitz Portage. Andre' St. Martin led the party, which reached the Nisqually River by nightfall. Camped at the usual place.





Conclusion

Indeed, success had evaded Jean Baptiste Ouvre on this fur gathering adventure; a fact that did not go unnoticed by William Kittson. Following this expedition, Ouvre's movements were severely restricted to those around the fort. In the late summer of 1839, Catholic priests arrived at Fort Nisqually and married Ouvre to Jannie Simpson, a union that resulted in the arrival of Jean Baptiste, Jr. No mention is made of his former wife Angeline. Although his contract with the HBC was up for renewal in 1842, it appears that 51-year-old Jean Baptiste chose retirement instead. His accounts continued to appear on the HBC's books until 1847, indicating that he was still alive, or that his family was living off of the inheritance. Unfortunately, the date and location of Ouvre's death has yet to be established.⁵⁰

Success also evaded the Duwamish People, as their way of life, even in 1838, was already in the process of change. By 1845 American settler John C. Holgate filed a claim on Elliot Bay and began encouraging others to join him. By 1849, the Duwamish People had begun raising thousands of bushels of potatoes on river bottoms near their villages.⁵¹ The arrival of the Denny party on the shores of what would become southwest Seattle in 1851 further exacerbated the gradual "taking" of the traditional "heart" of Duwamish lands.

In the Renton area, where this story takes place, the arrival of early settlers, including a family named Carr, then Erasmus Smithers, William Smith and Peter Andrews led to homestead claims along the Black River and in north Renton. Henry Tobin, who established a sawmill at the confluence of the Black (Mox La Push) and Cedar (Duw) Rivers, established his business on one of the Duwamish tribe's oldest village sites. The Point Elliot Indian treaties of the middle 1850s, and the ensuing war with the Americans displaced the Renton Duwamish People from the lands that they had inhabited for thousands of years. The American newcomers staked claims so that by 1857 many non-Native American homesteads

were occupying shores along the White, Black, Cedar and Green Rivers - and within the future boundaries of the cities of Seattle and Renton.⁵² Renton Duwamish Tribal members must enroll in the Suquamish or Muckleshoot Indian tribes and live on reservations near Auburn or on the Kitsap Peninsula to be recognized as Duwamish Indians - even to this day.

Author's note: To make this fictitious adventure behave like an authentic contemporary journal, one needs a great deal of background help. I'd like to acknowledge the significant support received from HBC biographer Bruce Watson, who's life pursuit to document the entire working *corpus* of the HBC's Columbia Department, a truly a significant endeavor, has aided my efforts here. Also, I'd like to thank David Buerge, a Duwamish Indian ethnological scholar, who's understanding of that culture and it's history in and around Renton has been woven throughout this story, via Colin MacKenzie's views, and without which would have made for a much less authentic recreation of the journey. My thanks also goes out to all who previewed this work in advance of this publishing. This "interpretative" story from 1838 has already been viewed by numerous eyes - who made numerous suggestions, many of which have been incorporated for the sake of clarity and readability.

Because of their size, the footnotes referenced in this article can be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Renton Historical Museum.



Museum Staff Notes

This past summer we hired Catherine Richardson as the collections manager/curator to wrestle with the massive Custer Collection of decorative furnishings, household goods, photographs, documents and other related material culture that continues to this day to present itself and surprise us here at the museum. About a month ago, Catherine was offered a full time position with the Frye Art Museum in Seattle – and so off to the races she went! Thanks Catherine for the time you had with us here good luck in your new and undoubtedly exciting position as the Frye's Head Curator!

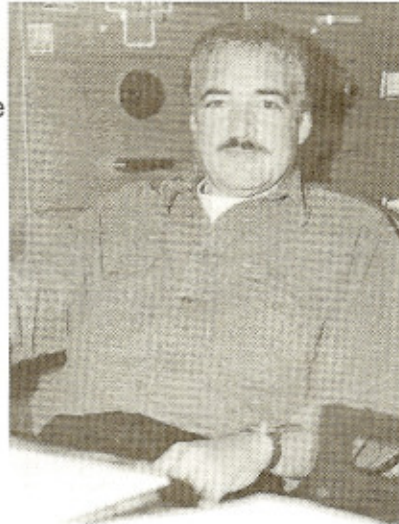
Not wishing to slow down the processing of the collection to any great degree, we revisited the list of applicants for our curatorial position and were fortunate enough to hire one of those other applicants, Steve Smith, who introduces himself in the following autobiographical sketch:

Hello! As your new Curator/Collections Manager, I have been ask to share a bit of personal information with you. I reside in Seattle, my place of birth, and when I am not watching, playing or coaching baseball I hang out in museums and libraries.

Professionally, I worked for Seattle area publishing, advertising agency and hi-technology companies in roles as a production manager. Currently, I am a volunteer with the Museum of History & Industry, and concurrently, a volunteer with the Henry Art Gallery. My assignments range from handling exhibit operations to collection management assignments under supervision of institutional staff. While with the Museum of History & Industry, I have worked with the registrar and collections manager to research and document the object collection and with the designer to design and install exhibits. My work with the Henry Art Gallery pertains to condition reporting and research on a portion of the institutions photography collection.

In the "it's a small world" category, Dorota Rahn (your Volunteer Coordinator) and I were classmates in the University of Washington's Museum Certificate Program. So, it should not take us long to form a solid working relationship between the two departments.

Thank you for the opportunity to work within your institution, and I look forward to the opportunity to meet you in the near future.



Of No Great Concern: Renton Trivia You Should Know

By Ethel Telban, Historian

Here are some tidbits you can use over the holidays to show your friends how much you know about famous people and events in this city called Renton.

- ◆ Diane Schur, jazz vocalist, went to Renton High School.
- ◆ Rock guitarist Jimmie Hendrix is buried at Greenwood Memorial Park Cemetery in a very decorative gravesite. Thousands visit his grave each year.
- ◆ Renton Library is the 2nd known library to be built over a river.
- ◆ In his younger years, Clint Eastwood, of Hollywood western and "Dirty Harry" fame, worked for the Renton Parks Department. I have heard he didn't do a lick of work, however he was a good leader. The young ladies that followed him around did an immaculate job. The City of Renton should be proud of him. He went from a lifeguard at Kennydale Beach to a major movie star, to the mayor of Carmel, California.



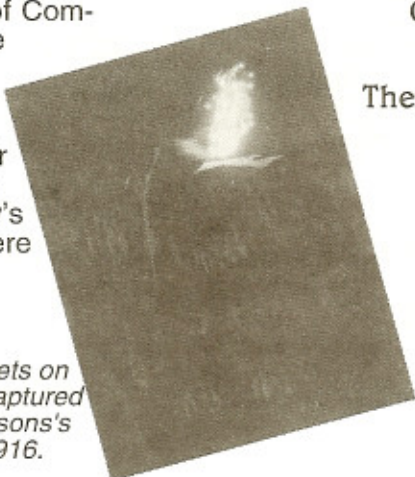
- ◆ In our early days, a fight broke out at Agnew's Saloon on Walla Walla Avenue (now Houser Way). The drunken combatants came rolling onto the railroad tracks where a third man, Soloman Baxter, stepped in to break up the rumpus. Baxter was stabbed by one of the ruffians, John Thompson. Baxter died and Thompson was tried and hanged. Thompson had the honor to be the first man lawfully hanged in King County and the first Caucasian man hanged in Washington Territory.

Notes Received



This past quarter we heard from Renton High School's oldest living alumni (Class of '23), **Jane (Jones) Lawrence**. She responded to our article on the Greek statues that used to grace the halls of the high school. Jane noted: "The class of 1923 . . . donated the **Discus Thrower** to the school. At that time many years ago, the Senior Class put on a play [with] the profit from this play [being] used to buy the statue. There were only 30 of us graduating but the play was a success." So that answers the question as to where it came from – but what happened to it and the **Diana the Huntress** statue?

Also, in response to the "Renton Rockets on Rainier" story, **Sarah Jane Hisey** responded by donating her dad's photograph album and a Rainier climb story to the museum. Her father, **Jack Allison**, went on that climb and took his camera with him! He also later recorded his thoughts and interviewed one of the other climbers, making this story more complete. So now, we have three perspectives, plus images of the climb and from scenes around Renton circa 1910 – 1920. Additionally, we learned that the Renton Commercial Club, the sponsors of that spectacle, eventually became the Renton Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber recently decided to donate their archives to the Society's holdings here at the museum.



Right: Rockets on Rainier as captured by Jack Allison's camera in 1916.

Corporate Citizenship Renton's Satellite Exhibit Workshop

On October 29th, Renton Museum Director Steve Anderson made an hour-long presentation to over 45 museum colleagues from King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties. His topic was centered on the successful History Zone Satellite Exhibit Project, which the Renton Historical Museum launched in 1997. Largely a grass roots effort from the start, the exhibits had two goals: 1) bring a small and easy to absorb local history exhibit to businesses in the Greater Renton Area and 2) raise the profile of the Renton Historical Museum by providing newsletters and lure brochures on the exhibit's exterior. Anderson revealed that without a transportable exhibit case that could stand up to the security issues raised, a whole new type of construction was developed to ensure artifact safety. That program has grown to ten satellite exhibits geographically spread throughout Renton's banks, hotels, libraries and other locations. Financial support from King County Cultural Resources Hotel/Motel Tax Grants, host sites and the Renton Historical Society has brought additional exhibits to the program - all of which were created in-house by Anderson. Their contents change once every six months, and the printed matter changes quarterly, gaining memberships and community support - making this a truly successful outreach program. Workshop attendees could see, first-hand, examples of case construction and actual exhibits.

Currently, these locations host the satellite exhibits:

- Holiday Inn Select, One South Grady Way, Renton.
- Silver Cloud Inn, Renton, 1850 Maple Valley Hwy, Renton.
- Valley Medical Center, 400 South 43rd, Renton.
- First Savings Bank of Renton, 201 Wells Avenue South, Renton.
- Renton City Hall, 1055 South Grady Way, Renton.
- King County Library System/Fairwood Branch, 17009 140th SE, Renton.
- Renton Library Department, Main Branch, 100 Mill Avenue, Renton.
- US Bank, 2950 NE Sunset Boulevard, Renton.
- Renton Senior Activity Center, 1150 Harrington Ave. N., Renton.

Donations

- The Boeing Co. Gift Matching – Christopher Wright
- Renton High School Class '52 (Maxine Wagner)
- Robert & Elisabeth Rivily
- Greg & Carrie Bergquist

Endowment

- The Boeing Co. Gift Matching – Basil Simpson

New Members

- Bob Carpine
- Michael Steinle family
- Julie Heise family
- Debby Smith
- Mark & Barbara Santos-Johnson family
- Kathy & Stan Graves
- Diane Baker
- Rolland & Deloris Dewing
- Carl A. Anderson – birthday gift membership
- Joan Bates
- Dan Stewart
- Nancy Kellogg
- Nathan Jones family
- Marilyn Langei

Renton Museum Report

By Steve A. Anderson, Museum Supervisor

The beginning of October marked my ninth year as the director of the Renton Historical Museum. The business of managing the site's operation continues to challenge me in many fulfilling ways. One item on my "to do" list can now be checked off, as the lead story in this quarterly answered my desire to introduce the membership of the Society to the Hudsons' Bay Company and the Duwamish People. Something that this story does to a limited extent.

Scope of Work Tabled

You should also know that the "scope of work" project I addressed in the last *RHQuarterly* has been temporarily tabled in order to concentrate on a "museum operating agreement" between the City of Renton and the Renton Historical Society. This agreement has been long overdue and is now necessary for the two entities to continue to work towards the upgrading and improvement of this museum facility. The agreement, once validated by the museum's primary funding entities, will hopefully join them at the hip and the mind (with regards to the Museum's operation), allowing each to do what they do best, while uniting them in areas that each can not or should not tackle individually. I have been charged with preparing the initial drafts of this document, utilizing similar documents from around the region as guides and style sheets. One session at the AASLH conference focused primarily on such an agreement.

Renton Remembers

Also this past September 11th, a consortium of museums from across the nation united for a one day event entitled *Museums Celebrate America's Freedoms - Joining Communities in a Day of Remembrance, September 11th*. A *Puget Sound Museums Remember Consortium* was created in the greater Seattle/Tacoma area, with your Renton Historical Museum being one of its members. The concept is that community-based cultural institutions need to be centers of open community dialogue, a place that instigates discussions, honors and remembers those gone before, and a place that fosters the freedom of expression and diversity - all things that we enjoy as citizens of the United States of America. Consider that on that horrible day in September 2001, several airplanes built in Renton were hijacked by terrorists and used to destroy two buildings supported by steel forged in the foundries of Renton's PACCAR.

The goals of the *Puget Sound Museums Remember Consortium* were simply: to be an active part of the reflective process, and to invite families and individuals to recall Sept. 11th, their own loss, and the future of our community by visiting together institutions that value cultural, personal, and expressive.



freedoms. We kept the Renton Museum open from 10 in the morning to 8 pm. We asked those coming to the museum to record their thoughts on that day one year ago, when the world seemed to be going mad. We hoped to capture how Renton citizens remembered, processed, and understood the events that occurred last September. Their thoughts were included in our "Renton Remembers September 11th" file. Artifacts from that day's events (signs, posters, etc.) were also accepted.

As we get into the new year, look for your membership renewals, which will be arriving in the mail. And thanks again for all the support everyone has given the museum.

Sincerely,

Steve Anderson

Donations to the Museum's Collections

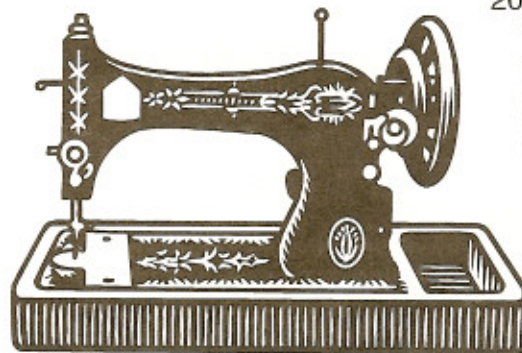
By Pearl Jacobsen, Registrar

Here is a partial list of the artifacts, documents and photographs accessioned by the museum staff so far in 2002



- 2002.0004 Real estate maps and plats, etc - Rita Harries
- 2002.0005 American Legion photos - American Legion - Renton
- 2002.0006 Yardsticks from local merchants - John Pavone
- 2002.0007 Renton High School sports uniforms of the past - Lief Zimmerman
- 2002.0008 Photo - Air Force inspectors at Boeing - Vincent Palermo
- 2002.0009 22 digital prints of the Renton Centennial Markers - Doug Keyes
- 2002.0010 Pepsi Cola carrier - Steve McBride
- 2002.0011 Oil, Wrench - Jerene Battisti
- 2002.0012 Coal Shovel and sadirons - Jim Greggs
- 2002.0013 Knights of Columbus photos and pamphlets - Tom Monahan
- 2002.0014 Photo - VFW Drum & Bugle Corp Champions - Sharon Thompson
- 2002.0015 Aerial view photo of Renton - Bruce Hudson
- 2002.0016 New Testament in phonograph records - Cynthia Columbi
- 2002.0017 Maps - Ruby Achtenberg
- 2002.0018 Photo - Phillips & Son Service Station - Homer Venishnick
- 2002.0019 Copper cables used by Puget Power, Photos from Renton Nile Shriners, Oil painting from Longacres - Douglas Edlich
- 2002.0020 Frying pans and oil cans - Esther Miles.
- 2002.0021 Metro bus schedules, photo of Metro busses and transit station - Eamon A. Rago

- 2002.0022 Magazines published in Earlington - Phizia Williams
- 2002.0023 Fraternal ribbons and identification tags - William J. Flynn
- 2002.0024 Valentines and identification bracelet from U.S. Lady Marines - Louise George
- 2002.0025 Tickets and programs from Renton Theatre productions - Ila Hemm
- 2002.0026 Slides and photos from Renton schools - Warren Jones
- 2002.0027 Console radio, vacuum cleaner, and medals, programs and roller skating awards for Dennis Rossman - Anne Rossman
- 2002.0028 American Legion and Eagles mementoes - Tom Monahan
- 2002.0029 Morris Recliner chair - Jim Kane
- 2002.0030 Diploma, class roster and photos from Renton schools - Lee Newton
- 2002.0031 Dr. Laviolette's house call booklet and prescription order form - Betty Laviolette
- 2002.0032 Photos of Renton Mercantile and Lily Hedberg - Ann Belmondo
- 2002.0033 Water pitcher - Margaret Preibe
- 2002.0034 Postcards and Photo - 64 lb. salmon - Homer Venishnick
- 2002.0035 Bryn Mawr Womens Club documents - Mildred Vacknitz
- 2002.0036 Food Steamer used in Renton restaurants - Harold Bruce



- 2002.0037 Ruler, Chamber booklet, Renton Hospital urinal - Max Fisk
- 2002.0038 Political handouts from Renton elections - John Garrett
- 2002.0039 Handmade wooden abacus - Furman Carter
- 2002.0040 Photos - Local schools, Volunteer Fire Dept., Sports - Mildred Faull
- 2002.0041 Hazen annual - 1971 Lonach - Cindy Columbi
- 2002.0042 Documents and Biography of local Renton family - James Renton Hind
- 2002.0043 Bench used on dredge, photos - Renton and landing craft on Puget Sound - Ken Gallagher
- 2002.0044 Metsker's King County Atlas - Alice Koch
- 2002.0045 Jaycee pins, awards, and shirts from 1950s - Pearl & Don Jacobson
- 2002.0046 Cook Books - Kathryn McKnight
- 2002.0048 Brochures and bylaws of Allied Arts of Renton - Allied Arts of Renton
- 2002.0049 Transit used to lay out the original building at Pacific Car & Foundry - Fred LaMarsh
- 2002.0050 Photo of Paul Carey - Cecelia Major
- 2002.0051 Painting of 9/11 tragedy on stone - Mark O'Malley
- 2002.0052 Books, photos and fraternal items from Renton Shriners, Baptist Church pamphlets, Longacres glasses, clothing items, etc. - Sharon Clymer

Rentonians

Memorials shown were received from those noted in reduced print from July 16 to October 31, 2002

Remembered



denotes former Society Life Member

denotes former Society member



Jack Allison
Nancy Kellogg

Leatha Allison
Nancy Kellogg

Lois Anderson 
Glenn Anderson

Jack Baker
Eileen Austin

Dorothy C. Bruce
Harold Bruce

Virginia Busato
Jim & Fran Bourasa

Tim Chinn
Hazelle DuBois

Eleanor Mary Crock
Beth & Mike Potoshnik

Louie Delaurenti 
Teresa Tonelli

Mary Delaurenti 
Teresa Tonelli; Judy & Don Gunderson

Aaron Goodwin 
Lorraine Goodwin; Charles Goodwin

Daisy Goodwin
Charles Goodwin

Eva Goodwin 
Lorraine Goodwin; John & Joyce Peterson; Charles Goodwin

Robert Hall, DDS
Lee & Judy Baker

Dixon Long
Gayle & Warren Jones

Kathleen Pottle Martin
Neddie Farrington; Velma McKean; Shirley Moretti

Alice McNabb 
Lucy Miller; Dorothy Pritchard;
Bill & Annie White

Pat Monaghan 
Eileen Monaghan Austin; Marilyn Ragle; Evelyn & Bert Nord

Eva Moreland
Peggy Bevan

Ann O'Brien
Jim & Char Baker; Eleanor Orff;
Marilyn Truscan; Luella & Gene Bolton

Annie Olsen
Lorraine Goodwin

Oscar Olsen
Lorraine Goodwin

Erminia Paulon
Ethel Telban; Mr & Mrs Al
Armstrong; Jerry & Barbara Shellan

Jack Pritchard
Bill & Ann White

Josephine A. Scoll
Neddie Farrington; Velma
McKean; Shirley Moretti

Ruth Setterman
Al & Shirley Armstrong; Judy &
Don Gunderson

Laura Shook 
Jim & Fran Bourasa

George A. Sidebotham
Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Betty Sipila

J. Brad Skagen
Mr & Mrs Al Armstrong

Rudy Starkovich
Betty Sipila

Margaret Tharp 
Bea & Frank Mathewson; Louise
George; Daisy Ward; Ron & Barbara
Dengel; Carrie & Greg Bergquist

Frances Trimm 
Florence Delaurenti; Rose Paglia;
Evelyn & Gordon Kuder; Ron &
Sharon Clymer; Anne Bagby;
Pauline Kirkman; E. Jane Lawrence;
Jerry & Barbara Shellan; Mr. & Mrs.
Bert Nord; Bert & Shirley Custer;
Carmel & Don Camerini; Gloria
Nichols & family; Nesika Chapter #54
OES Past Matrons; Judy Zanga;
Nesika Chapter #54 OES

Thomas Trimm 
Mr. & Mrs. Bert Nord; Gloria
Nichols & family; Judy Zanga; Dan
Sullivan; Jim & Mary Lou Burdulis;
Catherine Rutkowski; Teresa Tonelli;
Jerry & Barbara Shellan; Vanecia
Adderson; Ron & Sharon Clymer;
Anne Bagby

John VonWald
Ron & Sharon Clymer

Jean M. Vukov
Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Eileen But-
ton; Bob & Betty Minkler; Neddie
Farrington; Velma McKean; Shirley
Moretti; Harold Bruce

Lester Werre
Velma McKean

Recently Departed Rentonians and Society Members

Mari McFarlan Beattie
 Frances Cook
 Eleanor Crock
 Morfydd Davies
 Elaine England
 George L. Gallagher
 Geno L. Gotti
 Robert Hall, DDS
 Harry J. Kosny
 Carl Lippert
 Dixon Long
 Joan Luby-Meirán
 Alice McNabb
 Graham Miller
 Donald "Pat" Monaghan
 Robert J. Moore

Thelma E. Newman
 Annamae "Ann" O'Brien
 Sylvia Orn
 Erminia Paulon
 Gail Owen Reed
 George "Pokey" Sidebotham
 J. Brad Skagen
 Francis J. Sumner
 R. Norma Sutton
 Margaret McKnight Tharp
 (Life Member and Society Treasurer 1985 - 1990)
 Frances Trimm
 Lester Werre
 Elva J. Wilson
 Jean Vukov

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

Happy Holidays!

The Museum gift shop has several books that would make a nice gift. Suggested are the following:

*Traveling the Lewis & Clark Trail
 Discover Historic Washington State
 Pacific Northwest Lighthouses
 Puget Sound Ferries from Canoe
 to Catamaran
 Renton Where Water Took Wing*

We also have a few of the Renton Centennial tapestry afghans left.

A membership to the Renton Historical Society & Museum is always an appreciated gift. Benefits of membership are free admission to the museum, 10% discount on gift shop items, and the *Quarterly* mailed to members.



Join the Renton Historical Society Today!

Name: _____
 Membership Level: _____
 Business Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City:State: _____ Zip: _____ + 4 (_____)

Please make checks payable to the Renton Historical Society.

VISA/MASTERCARD # _____ Ex.Date: _____

Your Signature: _____

- Please share your e-mail address with us: _____
 Please send me a volunteer application form. (32/1)

Mail To: Membership Secretary, Renton Historical Society
 235 Mill Avenue South, Renton, Washington 98055-2133

Please Choose Membership Category & Any Donation You Wish To Make:

- Student Individual(\$8+) = _____
 Senior Individual (\$8+) = _____
 Individual (\$10+) = _____
 Senior Couple(\$12+) = _____
 Family (\$15+) = _____
 Benefactor (\$50+) = _____
 Business (\$40+) = _____
 Corporate (\$1000+) = _____
 Life (\$250+) _____
One Time Only
 General Fund Donation _____
 Endowment Fund Donation _____
 In Memory of: _____

Total enclosed: _____
continued on page 4

Centennial Snapshot

This photograph represents just one of the hundreds of images being discovered within the Charles L. Custer Estate (donated in November 2000)- a photographic collection that is just now being sorted and reviewed by the museum's staff in preparation for accessioning and cataloguing. It shows George (father of the donor Charles Lewis Custer) in 1906 - shortly after his marriage to Annie Lewis, whose image was featured in an earlier edition of the *Renton Historical Quarterly*.



Just a year or so prior to his sitting for this photograph, young George had returned from the Klondike Gold Rush. There, instead of grappling with a pick in the snow and ice, he'd attempted to find work as a carpenter/contractor in the rough and tumble world of prospectors, prostitutes, murderers and con artists - which he found clustered principally around Skagway. But, as George soon found out, there were "five men for every job" with the mail taking between five and six hours to both deliver and pick up. According to a letter written home by George, influenza and *spinal meningitis* claimed unlucky souls in five to six hours. Some of George's relatives within the Custer family had no idea he had gone to the northern gold fields, so at this point we are unsure as to his success in the venture. However, his toolbox and many of the tools he undoubtedly took with him - then used later in his contracting work here in Renton - are also being discovered within the house.

This photograph was taken in the Seattle studios of James and Bushnell, popular portrait photographers of the period, which many other Rentonites used to take formal images of themselves and family members.

This holiday season, when family is around, take some time to open the family album and identify some of your family's oldest cherished photographs. Record the information on the backs of the images in pencil, or, make a separate information sheet that can be referenced later by other family members - consider it a holiday gift to future generations!

Renton.
Ahead of the curve