

Benn's Bulletin Winter 2019



ABERDEEN'S GREAT BAPTISM OF FIRE

ABERDEEN HERALD

Oct 19, 1903

The Long Expected Conflagration Occurs Last Friday Morning. The Origin of the Fire Is Unknown. Starts in the Arctic Hotel and Sweeps the Business District of the City Off the Map.

Four Men Known to be killed and There May Be More. Six Injured. Fire Limits Established, and Everyone Pushing to Build Up Greater Aberdeen.

October 19 1903, will go down in history as Aberdeen's Black Friday, and future events will be reckoned from the day of the big fire. In the four hours between 9 a. m. and 1 p. m. a raging fire swept over about twenty acres of the most valuable and busiest section of the city, destroying property valued at about one-half million dollars.

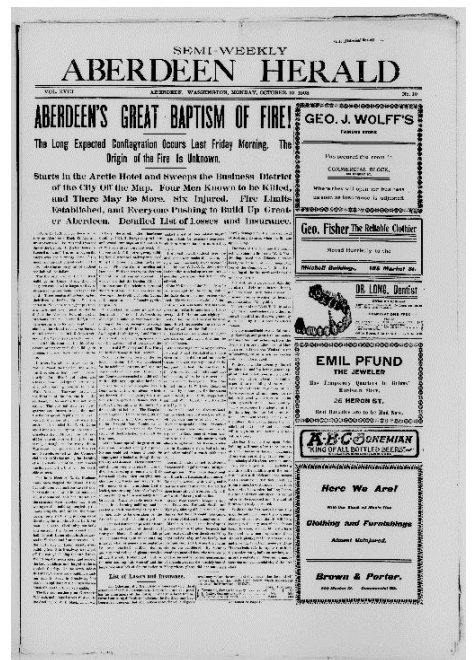
The fire originated in the old Mack building, on Hume street, that has long been considered so dangerous that insurance companies would not take a risk on it. Three inmates of the building lost their lives by the fire. Daniel Webster, porter in Walker's saloon, jumped from a window and was injured and died at the Aberdeen General hospital two hours later. George Kolf, a man with one leg who formerly kept a cigar stand at the Grand saloon, was

burned up in his room. Samuel Kirkup, a veteran of the Mexican war, was also burned to death in his room, on the third floor. Several other roomers in the building are missing, and may have perished in the fire.

In a very few minutes after the fire was discovered, the huge building, which was three stories high, and contained nearly half a million feet of lumber, was a mass of flames, and spread across the alley to the building occupied by 1.. W. Walker's saloon. The wind throughout the duration of the fire was from the southeast, but fortunately was not very strong. The city jail and fire headquarters were the next to take fire, and the flames spread rapidly in a northwesterly direction, after destroying the entire block bounded by F, G, Heron and Hume streets. By the most strenuous efforts the buildings on the north side of Heron street, between F and G were saved, although on fire many times. This saved much property on F, Wishkah and G streets, as well as the Commercial block on Market street, the burning of which would doubtless have spread the fire clear to the hills on the north side of town.

The brick block of N. C 3. Kaufman would have stopped the flames if they had only been coming from the east side, but the fire came at it from three sides, and it succumbed, and but two walls of the structure were left standing. After wiping out the

building occupied by the Smitte Drug Co. and others, the flames took a fresh start, and, jumping across the street, the Aberdeen State Bank was soon in a blaze. Continuing northerly and easterly, the flames spread along both sides of Heron street to Broadway, and to Wishkah and Market streets. On the north side of Heron street, every building from G to Broadway was wiped off the earth, including the two banks, Wolff's big dry goods store, and some of the best buildings and largest stocks of goods in the city. On the south side of this street, there is not a building standing from F St and Broadway, four blocks, except those of the Grays Harbor Music Co. and the City livery stable.



The fire ran northerly on G St to Wishkah, and jumped across Wishkah to the dwelling of W. B. Mack, which was partially destroyed. The handsome dwelling of Ed. Hulburt, the opera house and several dwellings on the north side of Wishkah St were destroyed. On the south side of this street, every building from G St to Broadway was licked up by the flames, including the Central school. With the flames traveling out Heron and Wishkah streets, the Aberdeen General hospital seemed doomed. It was realized that the burning of this institution meant the indefinite spread of the fire westward, and it was saved by blowing up the dwelling of John Young, on the opposite side of Broadway, with gunpowder. This checked the flames in that direction, and the efforts of C. A. Beard, who kept his buildings wet from the beginning of the fire, prevented its spread on the north side of Wishkah St. The dwelling of Jacob Kyser, I and Market streets, took fire from flying sparks, and only the hardest kind of work saved the residences of J.W. Carey and F.A. Hart, and further damage in that direction.

As soon as the magnitude of the fire became apparent, help was telephoned for the neighboring towns, and the fire departments of Hoquiam, Cosmopolis, and Montesano responded and did noble work in fighting the spread of the flames. The Aberdeen steam fire engine was a long time in getting up steam, which, together with the inadequate pressure or, the hydrants, gave the flames such a start at the beginning as to render the firefighters almost helpless. The Hoquiam steam engine did immense work, as did the band engine from Cosmopolis, and the hose brought from Montesano arrived at an opportune time, as the

long stretch of the fire had exhausted all the hose here.

As the flames spread, the greatest consternation prevailed among the people. No one could tell where it would be stopped, and it looked as though the entire city was doomed. Houseless women and children were to be seen flying in all directions, carrying a remnant of their household effects. Men carrying merchandise, and trucks and wagons filled with goods of all descriptions hastily loaded, were seeking places of safety, but in uncertainty as to where safety would be found. Much valuable goods were hauled from burning buildings and deposited where it was thought they would be safe, only to be overtaken by the flames in a short time and destroyed. The burned district comprised the heart of the business section of the city, and nearly ten blocks of valuable buildings and contents went up in smoke, entailing a loss of what is generally estimated to be over one-half million dollars, and a general feeling of gloom prevailed all over the city Friday night. However, by the next morning, this wore off, and the losers took on a look of determination.

Readers note:

We try to print full articles but sometimes they just don't fit and we ask for a shortened version. Often there is a collection of great photos and we only have room for one or two. Be sure to check out aberdeenmuseumfriends.org to see all the great stories and the photos in color.

Thank You organizations, businesses, and individuals who provided financial and other support that made Friends of the Aberdeen Museum 2019 successful and amazing!

- Aberdeen Art Center
- Aberdeen VFW
- City of Aberdeen
- Crowell Brothers
- David Quigg
- Duffy's Restaurant
- Grays Harbor PUD
- Grays Harbor Video
- Grays Harbor Wine Sellers
- Harbor Art Guild
- Harbor Tools
- Hoquiam Elks Club
- Jones Photo Historical Collection
- M and B Electric
- Mayors of Aberdeen and Hoquiam Eric Larson and Jasmine Dickoff and their teams
- Merlin Jenson
- Moore's Interiors
- Polson Museum
- Roy Vataya
- Seth D C
- Sierra Pacific
- The Daily World

Russ Ellison was the 3 time national champion in what sport?

See answer later in this newsletter

Friends Will Rock 2020

2020 plans are settling in and it's shaping up to be even busier than last year. We will continue the Facebook page, website, and quarterly newsletter. Our portable historic photo display will be moved to all possible events and changed for 1st Friday each month. However, we will step up from there.

A new history reading and research corner is being set up. Drop by any Tuesday or Thursday afternoon from 1-4 and enjoy our library and notebooks of biographies and stories of the men and women who have made Grays Harbor what it is. Our volunteers can help you with research.

Our work recording the Voices of Grays Harbor started in 2019 and we will be continuing with renewed energy in 2020. Contact us with recommendations of local people whom we should interview.

Friends of the Aberdeen Museum are planning to participate in the Rain Glow Festival the last Saturday in July. Be sure to set that day aside on your calendar. We aren't ready to make an announcement yet on our plan. It will be hard to compete with the Morck Hotel opening but we will try are hardest!

The first History Suitcase is ready for check out to area teachers. One challenge for our volunteers is to replicate this wonderful collection of treasures – which focuses Grays Harbor veterans and investigate other topics of interest to our schools like unions, tribal history, and music.

Let's Talk History

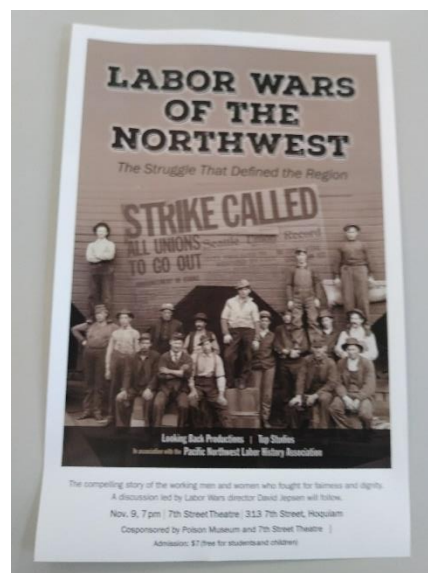
Friends of the Aberdeen Museum have a new event "Let's Talk History" and we are excited about the possibilities of these sessions.

This fun idea is inspired by the Aberdeen Pioneer Association. They ended their fall meeting by sharing memories of the Aberdeen Hoquiam Thanksgiving Day football game. What a terrific conversation.

Our first session discussing WWII impacts on Grays Harbor - Boeing plants, rationing, fear of invasion, forces at war, will be Tuesday December 10 in the conference room at the Tinderbox Coffee Roasters, 113 E Wishkah Ave, Aberdeen. There is room for about eight. We think keeping the gathering small will give everyone a chance to share his or her memories. If demand is high, we can always schedule more sessions. Our first session, Friends of the Aberdeen Museum will provide a pot of standard coffee. \$1 off coupon will be available if you want something fancier.

Interested participants can find the monthly topic on our reader board in the office, call the office at 360-533-1976, send an email to friends98520@gmail.com, visit our Facebook page, or website.

Walk-ins are always welcome but reservations will be honored



Other topics under consideration for future discussions are:

- Old time Unions – Wobblies, Strikes
- Bordello “Etiquette” and tales
- Logging hair-raisers
- Electric Park and early power in GH
- Becker Building changes and businesses
- South Aberdeen from Finch Farms to South Shore Mall
- Music in GH
- Highlander Room, Beach Boys, Pat O’Day’s Dunes
- Breweries, Moonshine, Saloons and Taverns

Cyrus W. Blackwell 5/16/1850-7/8/1939



Grouped by a Dolbeer and one of the last great steam donkeys are these old-timers, who posed in Aberdeen fifty years ago. From left: Cy Blackwell, boss logger; Bill “Cold Shut” Anderson, donkey engineer; Art Young, spool tender; Cy Monroe and George Monroe.

Cyrus was born in Franklin Co. Maine. He had 11 siblings. His mother died and father remarried. His new wife had 12 children!

As a young man, Cy and a brother ran away (in 1873?). They walked from Maine to the gold fields in the Black Hills. This writer does not know what happened to the brother, but Cy kept walking. He finally settled in Chehalis County, Washington in 1883. He started there as a “whacker” and later organized his own logging firm in connection with Jim Gillies.

Cy is credited with several noteworthy achievements. In 1883 Cy’s was the first operation to move from hand logging a “bull team”

arrangement. In 1884, Cy built the first Grays Harbor splash dam at New London on the West Hoquiam designed as he had seen them in Maine. In 1885, he moved his operation to the Wishkah Valley and built a splash dam there.

In the early 1890's, in his 40's, Cy married Flora Fogerty, now in her 20's. Their first child was born in 1892. Cy felt that Blackwell was plenty long enough to have to write so he didn't want to add to it much. He named his son Ira. Flora named the girls and didn't worry about length so names like Dorotha were of no concern. But Cy also named the other son, Eli. In all they had 5 children.

Cy was a man of innovation and well respected in the logging community. He brought the first Dolbeer (upright-spool type) steam donkey to Grays Harbor. He first used it to clear the Grays Harbor city area. It was Cy who first used the haul back innovation in the donkey rigging which still today saves many hours of tedious manual labor on the lines.

1910 the Census shows that Cy & his wife Flora Fogerty Blackwell were living in Aberdeen. Cy and his 18-year-old son, Ira, were logging the area that is now Aberdeen's Pioneer Park.

Ed Van Syckle wrote in 1932, "At 82 he still bucks timber to just keep himself fit."

The Grays Harbor Language

Didn't know it was a foreign tongue until spoke to non-native

You probably didn't know it was a unique tongue until it's spoken to someone not raised in the rain.

The Hump = Humptulips River
Cause-ee =Cosmopolis (Spelled Cosi)

Maunt-ee = Montesano (Spelled Monte)

Crick = Creek

The Moxie = Mox Chehalis Road or Crick

Raised on The Satsop, Chehalis, Wynoochee ---- River goes with that obviously but it has to be assumed
Bear candy = inner core of a young salmonberry plant

The Nat = Miller Natatorium (combined football, basketball & swimming pool complex formerly on B Street)

Driving "around the Loop" - The drive around the Olympic Peninsula
Going digging – Dig for razor clams
Jip-poe = independent logger

Jake = engine brake

Hog burner = conically shaped wood burner to power a mill

How's your spelling? Depends on your history & perspective.

How do you spell Wynoochee Lake or River?

Joe Malinowski, a Wishkah logger, Splash Dam manager & City of Aberdeen Master Mechanic for many years swore there were two "ee's" and fought hard to move folks that way.

Quotation from *On The Harbor* by John Hughes

"The Daily World, following the preference of knowledgeable mapmakers & others, spelled it with one "e" to the great irritation of Malinowski. He spent many years lobbying the paper, Grays Harbor County, the state and the federal government to support his spelling.

To an extent he succeeded, which is the reason you can still see highway signs with two different spellings just yards away from each other. ...

However when Malinowski died on April 1, 1975 at the age of 85...the paper spelled "Wynoochee" with

two "e's in his obituary – in honor of his lifelong fight."

What about Oyehut?

As the story goes, Oyehut has always been Oyehut, but years back a State sign worker made an error & the state road sign read Oyhut. Residents screamed. Finally, the state repainted the sign so it now directs you correctly to the little community. But as fate would have it during that time a developer got started with Oyhut Bay Resort, oops. Well both spellings will be represented for eternity it seems.

Ladies Basketball



(Place Holder for Connie's Story)

Did you know?

Sven Johnson operated tugboat called "The Flyer" which regularly brought supplies up the Wishkah River from Aberdeen. The other main alternatives to get to town were to hike or take a wagon to the Grand Forks, where the main Wishkah intersects with the East Fork. Here there was a long bridge (the Turner Bridge). On the north side, you could leave wagon & team and take a canoe to town. It was still a two-day run. One business operating in the Wishkah Valley was the Wishkah Boom Company. They built and operated the main river splash dam (Called by some the Malinowski Splash after the operator for many years, Joe Malinowski). The company also had "boommen" on the lower river who sorted the logs by 'brand' stamped on the butt. These were boomed up (chained together) and towed to the appropriate mill in town.

It was difficult to have the children travel far to school so there were many scattered single room schools. On the Wishkah alone, there were the Nisson, the Old Yellow, lower Wishkah – about 2 miles up, Big Creek, Aberdeen Gardens – which operated in 2 different locations over time, & Malinowski schools. All were replaced by the Wishkah School in 1926 or children were sent to the Aberdeen School District. One Wishkah pioneer

remembered that "Father" would just line up the kids & draw around the feet so he could buy the needed shoes. No child went to Aberdeen until they graduated from their one room school. Then, if they were to get further schooling, they stayed with a relative or worked for their board in town.

Burma Shave

Burma Shave made the trips along the old slow roads exciting. What do you remember?

Don't try passing
On a slope,
Unless you have
A periscope

"30 Days
Hath September,
April, June
And the Speed Offender" (outside
of McCleary)

Many a forest
Used to stand
Where a
Lighted match
Got out of hand
(This may be from the straight
stretch between the Wynoochee
River bridge and Devonshire
Road)

There was a guy in Chehalis that put them up on Pleasant Valley Road. They are changed monthly and at the end of the line, a sign tells what year it was originally used.

Canoe Memories

The Aberdeen Red Cross canoes were a source of fun and wonderful memories for many over the years. Several of those were lost in the Armory fire but two were restored and are being used by the Boy Scouts. Here are a few of those special experiences.

Bus referred to in these stories was Bus Fairbairn known to most Aberdeenites for his swimming instruction, lifesaving, canoeing lessons, and general maintenance of the Natatorium.



Figure 1 War Canoe

The Red Cross canoe house, which was behind the football practice field on the Wishkah, had some paddles strung with wire and small Christmas lights. When asked about them, Bus told of hooking the paddles to a car battery, mounting the war canoe on a flat bed and becoming a float in the Seattle Seafair Torchlight Parade featuring wonderful paddle drills.

Then he told of taking the lighted war canoe set up out to Ocean Shores' Duck Lake one night. This little escapade netted stories of a UFO or strange sea monster.

Sometimes canoes filled with paddlers would just run the rivers – Wishkah & Chehalis doing paddle drills and such. A favorite pass time was finding a ship loading on the Chehalis docks and doing drills to the applause of the crew.

Once Bus had the war canoe plus five smaller canoes dropped into the Chehalis. He urged the canoes along but his paddlers were playing. It was sunny & everyone goofed off with things like gunnel pumping. (That's when you stand on the gunnels and propel the canoe by pushing with fast knee bends.) By the time the parade reached Cosi it was dark. The paddlers were hungry & tired. Bus was afraid one would run up on a log and dump over in the dark. It didn't take much encouragement to get everyone to tie up all the canoes bow to stern in a long line and let the big war canoe tow us home. He had one light that he could scout ahead with and a little battery powered motor.

Another outing Bus took a gang to Lake Quinault on an overnight. The day was spent flipping the small canoes and rescuing each other. When night fell the war canoe was turned upside down and all the little ones leaned up on it to form the frame of a 'tent'. A tarp was thrown over the frame, worn paddlers crawled in. The beach had a slight slope to the lake and seemed perfect. But one should never forget why it's called in the RAIN FOREST! About three A. M. it started to pour. No one had trenched around the makeshift tent. The water ran down the hill in small streams – which didn't feel small to the sleepers. Drenched campers with

soggy clothes and bags, loaded up and went home about 5 A. M. A favorite game was hide and seek up the creek at Aberdeen Lake, coming down from Aberdeen Gardens on the Chehalis or very often just on the Wishkah above the canoe house launch. One canoe went out with a 5-minute head start. Then all the others followed and tried to find them. If everyone passes you, you get to hide again. The sloughs were a favorite but sometimes searchers would pass by a canoe right along the riverbank if they just slid in under a river mud-hung tree—being oblivious to muck was a key factor in winning this game.

Friends of the Phoenix
Rising from the Ashes

Membership funds go towards preserving and celebrating history in our community.

Membership Application and Record

Date _____

Member/Business Name _____

Phone number(s) _____

Email _____

I would like to receive the quarterly newsletter. Mail _____ email _____

I choose the following Membership:

Family/household - \$50 per year Youth/Student - \$5 per year

Individual - \$25 per year Senior 65+ - \$20 per year

Business - \$100 per year Sustaining Individual/Business - \$300/\$500 per year

Memberships start from date of payment and last one year.

I wish for my name to remain anonymous, not to be displayed in person or in any Friends of the Aberdeen Museum, or Aberdeen Museum publications.

Would you like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities? Yes No

If so, please list areas you have interest in (i.e. event volunteer, office volunteer, data entry, fundraising, board member, etc.)

I am interested in the volunteer waiver program.

I understand that I can earn my membership after completion of 10 volunteer hours. This waiver can be requested again once my membership year ends.

Friends of Aberdeen Museum Board
Monthly Meeting
First Tuesday of each month
6:00 pm
Market and K (K Street Entrance)

Board Members
Patti Walden - Acting President
Ruth Hamilton - Secretary
Nancy Cuyle - Treasurer
Jennifer Bennefeld
Amy Herring
Douglas Orr

*We are always looking for people who have a passion
for Aberdeen's history.*

Join us today!

FRIENDS OF THE ABERDEEN MUSEUM
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PO BOX 722
Aberdeen, WA 98520
(360) 533-1976

Email: friends98520@gmail.com

and

Visit our website at

www.aberdeenmuseumfriends.org

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