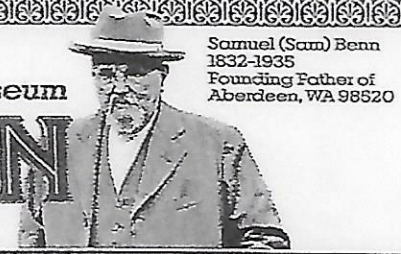


BENN'S BULLETIN

Friends of the Aberdeen Museum

SPRING 2023



WOMEN AND MUSIC IN GRAYS HARBOR

By Ruth Hamilton

March is Women's History Month, and the Friends of the Aberdeen Museum are highlighting the Women of Grays Harbor in our exhibit for March and April. One area in which women play a crucial role, is education, yet women have not always been well-represented in history books. How many of us have even heard the stories of women here on the harbor? Here is a small snippet of just one category.

Grays Harbor has enjoyed the gifts of many musicians since its early days. There are news stories of visiting performers in the several theatres and opera houses in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. Many immigrant societies had their own bands, choirs and ensembles, as did our schools. Several women were prominent in Grays Harbor music, as are their successors today.



Minnie Carey Stine



The Porter Ramblers



The Chronicle, September 15, 1941
Boyer cousins at fair
The Boyer Cousins will be performing on Grange Day, Sept. 15, at the Western Washington State Fair in Pasco. The group whose members are all siblings of first cousins, last played together about 15 years ago. They will be performing on the South Harbor Stage from 1:45 to 2:15 p.m. From left are Debbie Hill, Emily Norko, Jim Horvath, Renee Boyer and Mary Boyer.

Boyer Cousins

Back in the 1920s, Minnie Carey Stine, Contralto, who belonged to the local Choral Society, sang at events and funerals and eventually moved to New York to pursue her career. Some of her personal collections are held at The Polson Museum. In the heyday of the Morck Hotel, Vi McConnell led her orchestra in regular performances at dances, weddings and special events. Back in the 1940s, a group called The Porter Ramblers (featuring Mary Boyer) performed in the area. In the 1970s, some of the children of that band formed a group called the Boyer Cousins, who won the National Grange Family Music Contest in 1974.

Grays Harbor has enjoyed the teaching skills of luminaries like: Pat Wilhelms and Nancy Neisinger, who directed music in the Aberdeen schools for nearly 30 years;



Pat Wilhelms

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WOMEN - A FEW YEARS AGO

By Nancy Cuyle

We are highlighting a few of the accomplishments of women in our area. But to understand the progress that has been made, one needs to understand where women were just a few years ago. They were far ahead of the days when pretty much everything had to be made at home and town was 2 days away from the homestead, usually by horseback. But I remember the 50's and early 60's, and life then was still vastly different than today.

Most clothes were cotton or wool. Nothing was colorfast and darks had to be separated from lighter colors and whites. Women washed with a wringer washer, and dried the clothes on the line. There was one set of sheets for each bed, so changing had to be timed just right with an eye to the weather. When the dried laundry came in from the lines it had to be dampened before ironing because there were no steam irons. I remember a rubber cork with holes in a metal top that went on an old beer bottle. One sprinkled the clothes to dampen before ironing (sometimes starching was needed, especially the shirts Dad would wear to work).

Canned fruits and vegetables, jams & jellies, pies and cookies were all prepared at home. There were no home freezers. If Dad shot a deer or elk the meat had to be butchered, wrapped, and taken to a meat locker to store. Meat preparation was a whole family event, with meat spread over the

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The Friends Need You This Summer!!

We are pretty excited about this summer & hope you will be too. We have some really fun ideas for this year's Founder's Day parade & booth. What we need are some young people to **march in the parade** some of our most active folks just can't keep up with the float. We are also already developing our **Rain Glow Festival display**. We know you won't want to miss it – but why not be a part? ...well okay just a little hint – groceries & soda.

You can have a very active part in exactly how these displays come together. Be the first to give us a call or stop by the office. Call on your kids & grandkids too. This will be a truly fun experience for them and something you could enjoy together.

VISIT OUR OFFICE

Market & K St
 (K St Entrance)

Volunteers are in the office- Thursday and Friday 1-4 pm and during Aberdeen First Fridays from 5-8 pm.

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BEN'S BULLETIN:
 Quarterly Publication

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 The state of Washington has easy to access history online? Newspapers, images, and most available to share free of charge. Check them out at:
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Music



Nancy Neisinger

Susan Peters directs the music program at Hoquiam High School;



Susan Peters

Tiffany Maki, jazz singer and director of the Dukes of Swing, The Mellow Tones and the Grays Harbor Civic Band;



Tiffany Maki

Kari Hasbrouck, jazz singer, music teacher and director of the Grays Harbor Civic Choir – all have greatly impacted our community.



Kari Hasbrouck

Local singer/songwriters Amanda Ransom and Alex Mabey are

beginning to make their mark and gaining recognition.



Amanda Ransom



Alex Mabey

Some of these talented women have already taught the next generation and there will be more music to come. It hasn't just been Grays Harbor men who made their mark in music. Perhaps the women haven't been so well known, but music is universal and we celebrate all those who have studied, practiced and worked so hard to perfect their "craft."

Do you know of talented women we've missed? If so, we want to hear their stories.

Memorial

Eric Hovde

By

Becky Carossino

Nancy Cuyle

Malinowski Family

Hey! What's Happening with the Aberdeen Museum?

So glad you asked. The City Council had a workshop with the City Board of Museum & History February 15th. The Board put together a great presentation detailing why a museum is important for our city. The Mayor and Council were thoroughly engaged and responsive. This wasn't a formal meeting so there was no vote but the support for a museum in the former Sears building at 118 W. Wishkah was general. *So great to hear!*

Once roof repairs & other upgrades are completed in the building, this will save the money currently being spent on the warehouse.

The volunteers provided by the Friends and Grays Harbor Genealogy continue to catalog, record and work on artifact preservation at the recovery warehouse. The progress is slow but steady. It is gratifying to see that city leaders recognize the interest and commitment the community has in our history.

The Friends stand as we have since we were formed in 1976. We want a museum. Meanwhile our volunteers reach out at community events, conduct interviews & regularly display in our small office. As the City moves forward with a museum we will continue to provide volunteers, give financial support when we can and even operate the museum, if that is what the community wants.

The support that was forthcoming at this recent meeting deserves recognition. **Now is a great time to let the Mayor & your Council reps hear from you!**

A NEW BEGINNING - RECONNECTING US ALL WITH A VERY LONG HISTORY OF COMMUNITY

By Jim Minkler

Having not been born and raised in Grays Harbor, my first drive into Aberdeen gave me the impression that there was a long, rich history associated with this place. A visit to the Aberdeen Museum in the old Armory Building, helped fill in some of the gaps, and yet awakened so many more curiosities about this special place, my new community. I guess that's what museums do, open our eyes in understanding the current place we find ourselves, and open our minds to the past and all the wonders of what might have been. The imagination thus invigorated and inspired, I had some context and an enhanced appreciation for connecting the stories of Grays Harbor both past and current. And then the fire.....

The last five years since we lost the museum in the Armory inferno have given us time for reflection on just what a museum means for a community, and more specifically, for this community. As some of you may know, the word "museum" comes from the ancient Greek word "muses," which from Greek mythology refers to the nine Olympian muses, the inspiring goddesses who entertained the Greek gods. In modern English usage, when we use the word "muse" as a noun we mean someone who inspires us. When we use "muse" as a verb it can

mean to become absorbed in thought, especially to think about something carefully and thoroughly (musing about what might have been) or to think or say (something) in a thoughtful way.

Another view is the definition of museums agreed upon by the International Council of Museums (ICM) agreed to in 2022 -

A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing.

In the ICM definition there are keywords that will guide the Aberdeen Museum, when it reopens in a new location. Much was lost in the fire, but a great deal survived. It is an opportune time to ask, where do we begin?

Recently, on a blustery February day of rain, hail, wind gusts, and occasional rainbows, I drove down the scenic path to the Shoalwater Bay Tribal Community Library and Heritage Museum in Tokeland. I sat down

in the library for a chat with Earl Davis, the Heritage and Culture Director and tribal member, who, in his spare time, is also an avid artist (woodcarver, etc.) as well as a coach and many other things. Going back to "where do we begin," I recalled that a few years ago it was Earl who taught me what many of the local place names meant and how to pronounce them in Salish (more specifically Lower Chehalis). Not being a wizard at languages, I failed to pronounce them correctly at the time, but I do remember what some of them meant. Hoquiam, for instance, means place of fir trees, and Wishkah means stinky water. Cosmopolis means gravel bar along the river. Chehalis was not the name for the river, but rather for the large village and surrounding area of what is now Westport, and it means sand spit, and Oyehut means road through it. Just understanding all the place names with which we are so familiar, "Humptulips, Satsop, Ilwaco, Willapa, Wynoochee, all grossly mispronounced versions of the Salish names they possessed before contact with Euro-Americans, greatly enriches our appreciation and knowledge of where we live.

I asked Earl what he thought was important to keep in mind when partnering with area museums and what will be important for the Aberdeen Museum as we begin in a new location. Earl's answer follows:

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New Beginning**

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New Beginning**

"Telling the whole story. So many museums limit themselves too much. I understand if you are a museum specializing, say in ship wheels, but when you are just the local, geographical museum and when you just tell the predominant story, I think you are not only doing the minority group a disservice, but you are doing yourself a disservice too because you are missing out on half the stories and a lot of the really good parts of the whole story. Unfortunately in today's world there are really two things that are going against us. One is people's attitudes about, 'I want my story told,' and the other one is that we have come so far in wanting to recognize other groups that sometimes we do not tell their story because it might be upsetting to that group. I would love to tell a lot more of our story in our museum but time and funding are limited."

Going back to the importance of education in the ICM definition, I asked Earl what he thought students should learn about the twin harbors' history when visiting our museums. Earl had this to say:

"The thing that I always want, whether I am talking to kindergartners or students in a college class, the thing that I always want people to learn is that for us as Native People, history is not history. History is contemporary. When we can sit and recite verbally our lineage back to our great grandfather's

grandfather, where we came from and what villages they came from, and that's how we introduce ourselves currently; when we know what our family's occupation has been and in what village for the last five generations, and we continue to do those things currently, that is all important stuff and it is what I call living history and living culture and continues to thrive. The other thing that I always want them to know is being indigenous is not dependent on melatonin, you know, it really is where you were born and how you were raised and by who."

Obviously, everything Earl and I were discussing seemed to harken to the ICM comments about diversity and inclusion as well as heritage. Earl explained to me the experiences of local native people in our area during the reign of Washington Territory's Governor Stevens in the 1850's, and how the tribal leaders had refused to sign the Treaty of Olympia that would have required them to move from their homelands to reside on the Quinault Indian Reservation. Earl shared that the Governor supposedly stated, "Move all fish-eating tribes in Western Washington to the proposed reservation at Quinault." What Governor Stevens did not understand, Earl explained, is that the 500 Native American tribes residing on American soil were uniquely different, and the main thing for our people was to be allowed to fish and stay in the

village where our ancestors were buried. Earl mentioned that if anyone is interested in reading about this particular situation and time (1852-1855) in history he would recommend they read James Swan, The Northwest Coast; or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory.

With this idea of staying connected with one's ancestors, something museums do so well, I told Earl it might be hard to answer but what message would his great grandparents have for us today.

Earl replied that the question was very easy for him to answer. The great grandparents would have said, "Keep giving them hell." We were not belligerent, Earl explained, but we were pretty hard-headed and we did what we wanted. "We won't bother you, just don't bother us and we'll be fine. That gets handed down from my father to me, he got it from his father and my grandfather got it from his father."

It is hard to say how many millenia people have resided in the Grays Harbor area. In the seventy years from the first European contact in 1795 to the time the first settlers appeared, indigenous people of the area suffered through the worst human catastrophe ever known here, with from 80 to 90% of the population dying from epidemics such as smallpox. Earl explained

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New Beginning**

that in the Pacific Northwest nature is not kind to archaeology, from geological shifts to tsunamis, sending former village sites into the sea, but human remains found in the area have carbon tested to be 3,500 years BCE. For reflecting on our area's human history and heritage, that may be a good place for beginning the telling of the long, rich, whole story.

If you are interested in visiting the Shoalwater Bay Tribal Community Library and Heritage Museum in Tokeland, they are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, but are closed from noon to 1:00 p.m. for lunch. As Earl says, they are more than happy to answer questions people may have.

* * * * *

Washingtonian 7-2-1918

**Section Gang Of Women
Put On At Hoquiam**

Clad in comfortable overalls, six women now are at work daily on the Northern Pacific section west of this city and have been assigned to the occupation of cutting grass and keeping the right of way free of litter.

"The women are doing excellent work," said Foreman Johnson yesterday. "They are particular about their work and speedy."

Foreman Hughen of the rolling stock branch of the Northern Pacific here announces he can use a number of women in his department. They are desired as locomotive wipers, work that should prove congenial, he states. The wage paid men is offered, \$2.75 a day.

The shortage of men is becoming so acute that it is believed it will be but a matter of weeks before women will be used in many departments.

(Remember the men were off to fight WWI, so these jobs were offered to women – even if as clearly noted they were in overalls instead to the accepted dresses – and at the unheard of - same rate as men.)



Reciprocity

By
Cora A. McDermoth

Little bird high in a tree.
Won't you come and play with me?
I will pet you soft as silk.
Let you share my bread and milk--
We will have oh, such fun.
Pretty birdie please to come.

* * * * *

Little girl beneath the tree.
Won't you come and visit me?
You may peep into my nest.
Taste the worms that you like best--
We can hop and fly and run,
Little girlie please to come.



**Cont'd from Page 1 -
Few Years**

dining table; a baby scale to weigh out the packages and meat paper torn into lengths ready for wrapping.

Most of the vegetables & many fruits were grown at home. There were no microwaves to speed things along – pressure cookers were the big thing. Women were not seen in pants. There were "house" dresses and dresses for church/weddings & such. I remember Mom having 3 dresses; 2 house dresses (jersey so there was no ironing) and a fancier dress (with a hat, of course) for public occasions.

Women didn't just stay home because there were no jobs for them. They stayed home because it was a full time job cooking meals, sewing clothes, mending, knitting, baking, canning, weeding the vegetable garden, cleaning house with old rag mops & brooms.

Frequently a household had only one car, so grocery shopping waited for Saturday or Dad picked up what was needed on his way home, things Mom couldn't make like butter and milk.

So let's celebrate how far we have come, mostly since WWII brought lots of inventions in its aftermath. But let's not forget to honor where we have come from and the parents who made it all happen.

* * * * *

Wolff Discusses

The Wage Scale For Women

A conference held at Olympia yesterday between representatives of female employes, of the public and of the employers, fixed the minimum weekly wage of women in this state at \$10 (*per week*). George J. Wolff of Aberdeen, who was one of the representatives of the employers, is tickled to death. He has furnished The Washingtonian with the following interview:

"The women employes of the state of Washington surely have reason to be gratified and should rejoice over the minimum wage of \$10, which has been adopted unanimously by our conference in Olympia. The amount allowed as a minimum is greater than the commission expected. It is the highest in the United States and consequently the highest in the world. Before I left for Olympia, I gathered as much information as possible from employes, and they told me that if a minimum for experienced help of \$9 should be adopted it would be gratifying indeed. The state of Oregon provides for a minimum wage in the city of Portland of \$9.35. Therefore, we suggested first a minimum of \$9 per week for experienced help, state-wide. The estimate by the employes as a minimum was based at \$13.30, which was of course too high.

"The first day of the conference was spent in presenting arguments on the part of the employers, the public and the employes, but no agreement was reached. A motion to compromise was made, that the matter be referred to a committee

to effect a compromise. The committee consisted of Miss Florence Locke of Seattle, representing the employer; Professor W. G. Beach, of the University of Washington, representing the public and George J. Wolff of Aberdeen, representing the employers. We agreed on a minimum wage of \$10 for experienced help, and the matter of apprenticeship left out, having no jurisdiction, as the law provides that the industrial welfare must fix such rate. And having confidence in the judgment and fairness of the commissioners, we left the discussion with the commissioners to fix a rate and terms of apprenticeship, and hope that they will provide a minimum wage and terms for apprenticeship which will be satisfactory to employers as well as employes. The employes did not favor an apprenticeship minimum, outlining that even an inexperienced person who has no knowledge of merchandising should receive the minimum of \$10. If such would be the case, in my estimation it would not be a benefit, but actually a detriment for young girls whose ambition is to help their parents or start to earn a livelihood for themselves, for the reason that if employers in the state of Washington should be obliged to pay a minimum wage of \$10 to inexperienced help, it would cause experienced women from other states to come here where the minimum is considerable less, and naturally the experienced women would have the advantage over the inexperienced girl and she would not hold a position, which would cause a great many unemployed

women to seek housework or other employment.

"After arguments of the first day and no agreements could be reached, it looked as if the conference would have to adjourn, not accomplishing what the meeting was intended for. Different members of the welfare commission addressed the representatives of the employers, the public and the employes, cautioning them to be considerate and not to be too as it would be impossible for a conference to have three employers who would be more fair and who represent the highest standard of employers and who demonstrated willingness to do what is right.

"As far as most of the stores on the Harbor are concerned, it will not effect very many, and I am pleased that the experienced people will get a minimum of \$10, but I am in hopes that the commissioners will act wisely on the apprenticeship, for if they do make a mistake, it will work a great deal more hardship on the employes than on the employers.

"I consider it an honor that I was chosen for this important conference and I am satisfied in my own mind that I have done all that is fair and square for all concerned."

Generally a work week was 50 hours for some industries up to 65 hours. While it varied by type of work women earned a bit over half of pay for men at the same job. This was considered fair because, after all, men were earning for a family. That a woman might be widowed or divorced and also earning for a family was not a consideration. Strikes for wage increases and union membership for all workers really began to take off after about 1918.

**Saving Yesterday
for Tomorrow**