



Index Historical Society

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A member of the League of Snohomish
County Heritage Organizations

Summer 2011 Newsletter
Index Art Festival August 6

Meetings: Monthly except December, second Tuesdays at the museum, 7:00 p.m.
Contacts: David Cameron, President, (360) 793-1534; Bill Cross, Treasurer (360) 793-7744.
Newsletter: David Cameron, editor; David Meier, circulation.

News of the Museum

Several popular features of this year's museum season have included new access to photos and documents, a century-old wedding dress, and the "What Makes Index Tick?" game. Thanks to a donation by David Meier, we have a computer dedicated to public use which has the beginnings of access to a number of photos by topic (such as logging, mining, and the granite quarry). Documents from our collection also are being added, such as the Frank Niles account of newspapering at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dorothy Pickett's mother's silk wedding dress and other clothing items are on display in conditions carefully protecting their fragility. These have not been exhibited for a number of years due to that need for protection. Meanwhile youngsters and older visitors alike have enjoyed finding the various clocks and clues to answer the list of questions and win a free copy of Ruth Burgstahler's book *Index: A Historical Perspective*, also for sale in our shop display.

UW Research Papers Received

University of Washington Bothell Campus professor Dr. David Stokes has sent us copies of his 2009 students' work researching topics in Index area history. These are the results of his bringing his class in regional environmental history to visit the town and Heybrook Ridge to help them apply classroom knowledge to actual settings. This spring he returned with 40 students, all working in groups and again guided by Bob Hubbard, Louise Lindgren, and David Cameron. Especially useful results from the first class include papers on Garland Mineral Springs, the Civilian Conservation Corps at Camp Index, and land ownership history of Heybrook Ridge. We share this information at our monthly meetings and look forward to the next series of reports.

Today's Preservation Tip

Avoid touching photographs, negatives, and slides; handle them by the edges. When you work with them wear clean cotton gloves – cheap and easy to wash. Buy a box and share!

New Acquisitions to Our Collection

Among the recent larger additions this spring are a somewhat worn directional sign to the Index Sportsmen's Club trap shooting grounds from David Heckman and a wooden and canvas heavy stretcher lettered from Index High School. Carol Delano donated a Lee Pickett photo #4447 dated March 29, 1911. It shows her father Carl Russell (who later was a pharmacist in Index) and possibly her uncle at the Sunset Mine. From Wendy Bowen via Ray Coleman of Gold Bar came a numbered print of former Index mayor Wyatt Wood's drawing of the Town Wall, created in 1978. Also from our former mayoral ranks, Kem Hunter has given us a box of assorted metal items excavated from the grounds of his and his wife Etta's home across the alley from the Index Store. That site used to be a livery stable and then garage.

Robert Receives Award

In June member Waylon Robert was honored for his work in trying to preserve the Bush House in Index and the Skykomish Hotel in that community. He received the King County John B. Spellman Youth Award for Preservation Advocacy from County Executive Dow Constantine. You may recall that Waylon worked with the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation in nominating the Bush House to the state's most endangered structures list, and at last year's Arts Festival was busy gathering signatures supporting repairs to the Skykomish building. This spring he also appeared in the key role of Nathan Detroit in his school's production of the musical "Guys and Dolls." Come fall he will be entering the freshman class of Blanchet High School in Seattle.

More on the Bush House

To date there has been little progress with our historic hotel. Some of the second story rotted railings and supports were taken off, but there has been no owner action to remove the rest of the collapsing fire escape and balcony material despite a certified warning letter sent to the owner by Mayor Bruce Albert. At the July town council meeting maintenance supervisor Bill Cross was asked by Albert to fence off the front of the building as a public safety hazard, the cost to be a lien on the property.

Sportsmen's Hall Sold

The venerable Index Sportsmen's Hall at the northeastern corner of Sixth and Avenue A has been purchased from the club by David Heckman of Baring. A dealer in antiques who keeps a special eye out for items related to Index, he is planning on upgrading both the hall and the small rental house in the rear. A quality sandwich shop with ice cream and beverages might be in the future, along with items from his collection and perhaps with some for sale.

The club found itself in financial difficulties to the federal requirement that it clean up its trap shooting grounds, contaminated from years of lead shot accumulation. It also had let its special use permit for the national forest land expire. Since then the U.S. Forest Service razed the structures and closed the area (including the softball field) to public access.

In an improvement, the Forest Service has spread gravel, signed, placed a portable toilet, and set a garbage receptacle in the neighboring open camping space between the Reiter Road and the river. The lack of toilet facilities especially has been a problem, and the actions were greatly appreciated.

Copier Donated

This newsletter was produced on a copy machine donated to the society by Lynnwood printer Michal Gribben, alerted to our need by Forrest Johanson. Thank you!

From the journals of R.F. "Frank" Niles: 1899 – (continued from last issue)

[Producing the *Index Miner*]

Until we were ready to do our own cooking I ate at a restaurant run by **Mrs. Annie Ross and a nephew, Henry Conroy**. Sometime later Gorham organized an excursion, carried by a train, from Snohomish. The town was swamped by the visitors with no provision made to feed the extra people. The two restaurants then operating did their best, but a lot of people could not be fed. The price of meals was 25 [cents] and it was collected after the meal was served. Henry was doing the cooking, and he afterwards told me that he cooked 72 short orders and then got to the door to collect as the customers left.

Mrs. Ross was a remarkable woman. Left a widow in Minnesota with five small children, she came west and raised a fine family. I never found out how long Henry had been with them. When I first met them, Tom the oldest boy, was perhaps 11 years old. Then in order were May, Bob, Inez and Frank, around three or four years. I never found how long she had been a widow. She was probably 40 to 45 years old, and I thought Henry was about my own age of 24. They ran two restaurants, and she had a lodging house adjoining her home at different times. We became very good friends, and going to her home at Index and visiting them after they moved to Everett and then to Lowell was about like going home.

There was a rather remarkable co-incidence. Years before I was born my father had a hunting companion in Minnesota named Oscar McGee. **Bill Russell**, with whom I had worked on the Snohomish *Tribune* had known him and so had Mrs. Ross, though none of the three had known either of the others. (To be continued.)

Memberships: New and Renewals

Please join us for our year’s news and activities! We appreciate your interest and support in helping increase our knowledge and materials relating to our past. In addition to your membership, we especially need photos, printed materials, and artifacts which are from the 1930s to the present for our collection. As with most historical museums in the Pacific Northwest, we are strong on the early years and have much less from our own times, because those things are much more likely to be around us and familiar. Twenty years from now, though, these will be the “good old days”!

Index Historical Society – Membership Form

PO Box 299 Index, WA 98256-0299

A 501-c3 organization eligible for tax-deductible donations

All members receive free admission to the museum, a membership card, and our quarterly newsletter.

Businesses and Patrons receive all above *plus* a certificate of membership suitable for framing.

Benefactors receive all above *plus* a certificate and a copy of the book, *Index: A Historical Perspective!*

Individual	_____	\$10.00	Business	_____	\$ 25.00
Family	_____	\$15.00	Patron	_____	\$ 50.00
Student/Senior	_____	\$ 5.00	Benefactor	_____	\$100.00

To order books (postage included, sales of which benefit the Index Historical Society):

Snohomish County: An Illustrated History, winner of the 2005 WA. Museums Assoc. Award, add **\$59.57**

Index: A Historical Perspective, written by Ruth Burgstahler, add **\$5.50**.

Name (_____) Phone _____

Address E-mail _____

City State Zip Code _____

Would you like us to send volunteer information? We have many opportunities! YES _____