

APRIL 2008 NEWSLETTER

MONTHLY MEETING

We will hold our April Meeting on the Tuesday, the 8th at the University Branch Library at Roosevelt Way and N.E. 50th Street. The time has been moved back a half hour in response to several requests. The meeting will begin at 5:30pm in the downstairs meeting room.

Speaker Robert Foxcurran has been an avocational historian for many years looking into the pre-English, trapper era that we have all heard of and know little about. He knows more about this French period than possibly anyone today and will tell the tale of Washington Territory's Two Frenchtowns. Actually Frenchtown is the name of both settlements and both were located on tributaries of the Columbia River. Their history tells the story of the Canadian fur trading families that stayed on below the 49th parallel to settle down. Being among the first settlements to appear south of the partition line in 1846, they witnessed the first moments of the new territory's history.

The towns straddled the opening and closing of the frontier in the Pacific Northwest—first, in terms of timing and, secondly, by filling the gap between the territory's English and Native Americans, the two principal ethnic groups. These two communities reveal the complexity and nuances of the local frontier that is usually missing in the story of this era.

Rob is completing his teaching endorsement at the UW. Past president Junius Rochester will introduce Rob and make sure we have enough time for questions.

MAY MEETING

Our speaker is Rich Kolin who has been building and studying traditional wooden boats for almost forty years. He has written two books on the subject and numerous articles on the history of the design and use of these boats.

He'll talk about the types of boats found in the Northwest in the days when oar and sail were considered efficient methods of propulsion. Wind and muscle vessels are little known parts of our marine history. He will also tell the story of the development of the oyster fishery on Shoalwater Bay in the 19th century and how boats evolved to serve the industry.

The meeting is Tuesday, May 13th with an introduction by former co-president Maria Pascualy.

MAY RAMBLE

There will a second event in May. Thanks to Board member Dan Peterson (bdksp@comcast.com), the Ramble is back after several years' vacation. This spring we will visit the wonderful, abused, pampered and misused UW Arboretum in May including a private tour through its urban acres. The place to meet is the Graham Visitor Center (near the north end of the park) on Sunday, May 18th at 1:00pm. The tour will be on and off paths with some muddy spots. Please donate \$2 per person.

MARCH CONFERENCE

A Guild highlight - the annual history Conference - drew well over 100 participants to MOHAI on February 29 and March 1, 2008. "Blue vs Gray: The Civil War in the Pacific Northwest," complemented the museum's excellent ongoing Lincoln exhibition.

Chief Justice Gerry Alexander of the Washington State Supreme Court gave the plenary talk entitled "Abe Lincoln and Washington Territory." Justice Alexander's theme was then augmented by sessions ranging from "War and Diplomacy in the Pacific Northwest" to "Everyday Life in Western Washington During the Civil War" to "Politics and Dissent on the PNW Homefront" to "After the War." Independent historian and author Robert Ficken gave a luncheon talk about how the War affected Washington Territory.

Guild members participated as session chairs, registrars, presenters, coordinators and questioners. Academic publishers came to help with the book sale during the Saturday session. The Guild Board extends special thanks to MOHAI historian Lorraine McConaghy for her successful role as Conference Program Chair.

Among suggestions for the next Conferences: session chairs might hold speakers to 20 minute presentations thereby allowing time for questions; McCurdy Gallery provides a more intimate setting than the large auditorium; speakers should be reminded to use the microphones. Overall, the event was a stimulating review of a little-known aspect of Pacific NW history - the Guild's challenge every year.

A special statement of appreciation must be given to member Cathy Lykes who did the non-program planning and execution. That everything occurred seamlessly and not one thing failed to happen as intended indicates how well the conference was coordinated.

2009 ANNUAL MARCH CONFERENCE

Even before the close of this year's conference discussion began about 2009. The selection of a theme for next year has been easier than usual. Every one agrees that the centennial year of the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition must commemorate the event. Your suggestions are welcomed as will be proposals for talks at a later date. As usual, expect the event the first weekend in March. We also plan to have an autumn Ramble to see the remaining pieces of the great fair on the University of Washington campus.

GUILD OFFICERS

The Guild has a permanent mailing address: PO Box 85457, Seattle WA 98145
Officers can be reached by email:

Paul Spitzer	bornbutonce@gmail.com
Marjorie Reeves	mchs67@yahoo.com
Dan Peterson	bdksp@comcast.com
Junius Rochester	boobus@speakeasy.com
Judy Bentley	non-participating member

EVENTS CALENDAR

The Washington State Historical Society distributes a full list of events by email. It can be found by going to WashingtonHistory.org. The list includes upcoming events throughout the entire Pacific Northwest.

PNW HISTORIANS GUILD MEMBERSHIP

We request that those who attend our meetings, conferences, banquets or are interested in encouraging the writing and dissemination of the region's history become a Guild member. Membership is \$20/year and open to all. New members should go to our website at pnwhistorians.org to find an application form.

NARA IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTENT OF THIS NEWSLETTER