

Bothell Museum Sentinel

“Not your usual newspaper”

Summer 2025

Issue 15



The museum is open Sundays, 1-4 PM, April through October.

Fourth of July

The Bothell Museum will not have an entry in Bothell’s Fourth of July parade this year due to lack of participants. But we invite members to dress in period costumes and participate in the Pancake Breakfast at the Park at Bothell Landing from 8:30 to 10:30 AM. You would stroll the grounds and help to monitor visitors in the three museum buildings. The MANY visitors make it impossible to provide docent tours; it is, rather, answering questions and ensuring that the displays are not mishandled.

If you wish to partake of the free pancake breakfast, arrive at the Lytle House just before 8:30 AM so that you are near the head of the line, which eventually winds all the way up to and along the highway!

I hope many of you will participate in this opportunity for the community to see you and our museum buildings. Please let Jill know if you are planning to attend at JillK@BothellHistoricalMuseum.org.



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Connect with us! Got a question?

Want to support the Museum by joining? Email...

BothellMuseum@gmail.com with your questions or to get an application form.

BHM “Players” Honored by NSD

Gladys Worley, the Hannan’s daughter who was instrumental in the Museum’s beginnings, and Pat Pierce, Collections lead who facilitates and annotates artifact donations, will be inducted into the Northshore School District’s Wall of Honor. The Wall of Honor Ceremony is scheduled to take place on Thursday, August 14, at 6 p.m. at Pop Keeney Stadium.



Supported by your contributions and ongoing support from ...



The Museum's Amberola

For years, the amberola in the living room was silent, waiting for repairs. Then Larry Gibbons oiled it. It now plays music! And its sounds are demonstrated during our open hours. Thanks, Larry.

The earliest internal horn of Thomas Edison's Amberola model was equipped with selectable 2 and 4-minute gearing for playing wax cylinders—Amberols. Upon the introduction of Blue Amberols in 1912, a Diamond A reproducer was designed for playing only celluloid cylinders. Its small-tipped conical diamond stylus and increased stylus pressure would seriously damage wax cylinders.

After an Edison factory fire in December 1914, the Amberola line was simplified in both mechanical and cabinet design, resulting in the 4-minute-only Amberola 30, 50, and 75, each model number indicating the initial retail price in dollars.

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Board and Committee members can be contacted at *BothellMuseum@gmail.com* or by phone using the Membership Directory.



Our model is an Amberola 75 introduced 1915. It is an upright with three drawers for record storage made of oak and mahogany.

In late 1908, Edison had introduced wax cylinders that played for nominally four minutes (instead of the usual two) under the Amberol brand. Many of the songs, marches, and vaudeville skits of the earlier cylinder era were simply given a facelift—a new verse here, a verbal or non-musical interlude there—in order to meet the longer time requirements.



These “long-play” cylinders were made from a harder (and more fragile) form of wax to withstand the smaller stylus used to play them. The longer playing time was achieved by reducing the groove size and placing them half as far apart. In 1912, the Edison company eventually acquired Thomas B. Lambert's patents to the celluloid technology and created the cylinders around a plaster of Paris core. Production began almost immediately under a variation of their existing Amberol brand as Edison Blue Amberol Records.



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McMenamins History Pub Talks

BHM partners with McMenamins to present the pub talks. Several members meet and communicate with McMenamins' historian to explore topics on an on-going basis. The talks are on the last Tuesday of the month at 7 PM.

June 24: Harry Tracy: The Last Desperado of Washington presented Margaret Turcott, David Black, Donald Black, Jim Mattila, and Carston Curd. From the late 1890s to 1902, culminating in a manhunt in Bothell.

July 29: Jill Glass – Hydroplanes! A driver and volunteer at the Hydroplane & Raceboat Museum in Kent, Jill will acquaint you with the history of hydroplane racing including Seattle's role in it. *[Editor's note: I visited the museum last month. It is very much a hands-on operation with historic piston hydroplanes in various states of reconstruction. The Notre Dame was started up to see if the previous day's carburetor issues had been resolved.]*



Petals on the River

It was a lovely day, May 25th, for the Petals on the River memorial event on the bridge over the Slough. Approximately thirty people gathered to drop flower petals into the flowing water in memory of deceased friends and relatives. The Bothell Florist donated two large baskets of white, red and pink rose petals, and attendees brought petals from their gardens. Two new names were added to the Memorial Board this year: Jeanette Backstrom, long-time treasurer of the Bothell Historical Museum, and Jack Beal, husband of museum member Lois Beal.



Celebrating Jeanette Backstrom

Jeanette Backstrom, decades-long member of the Bothell Historical Museum, died in February and was celebrated May 25th at a memorial gathering of friends, neighbors, and museum members. Cookies from Hillcrest Bakery were provided along with Jeanette's favorite pecan cookies baked by former neighbor and current BHM board member Mary Anne Gibbons. A slide show of photos from museum scrapbooks, prepared by Margaret Turcott and Sue Kienast, was shared as Sue emceed the event. Personal items of interest belonging to Jeanette were displayed alongside written tributes from many friends. The 40 guests came from as far away as Birch Bay, WA, to honor Jeanette on this special occasion.



President's Message and Introduction

by Michael Lemeshko

Our annual Board retreat was held earlier this year in March and the first item considered was filling the vacant board president position. I was elected unanimously to fill the balance of the term of past president Mary Evans. To be truthful, I was a little hesitant to accept this challenge because of the large amount of responsibility and time commitment that goes with the job. I am happy to report that the positive experience I have gained over the last 2 ½ months of working with the board and other volunteers has far outweighed any of my initial concerns. I am honored to hold this position, and I am committed to doing what's best for the Museum and community that supports it.

The following are some key achievements in the last couple of months.

- For the first time, we have established a baseline budget with designated spending amounts for each expense category along with projecting our income for the year. And, speaking of income, we have received a grant from 4Culture that is about 3 to 4 times as large as last year, which is a big help for our bottom line. Special thanks to Bob Gerrish, our Treasurer, who put in a tremendous amount of effort writing the grant and keeping up with all the requirements to obtain it. Additionally, we have reviewed and moved our investments to higher yielding accounts enhancing our rate of return. Coupled with a first-ever work plan, I am confident that the Museum is on a stable financial footing.
- I have also begun to put together a strategic plan which will set our goals & objectives for the next 5 to 20 years. I hope to have it in place within the next six months.
- To facilitate quicker decision-making, the executive committee of the Board is now meeting the second Thursday of each month. The purpose is to communicate and resolve critical issues in a timelier manner whereas before it could take up to a month for the full Board to be able to review.

Calendar plates found in the Museum.

Left: 1909 plate.

Right: 1910 Co-operative Mercantile plate

These are all best practices for nonprofits as recommended by the Washington State Secretary of State's Office.

Some of our other projects include having a contractor in place to repair any cracks and paint the ceilings in the Hannan House parlor, upstairs bedroom, dining room, and kitchen. The work is scheduled to occur in July between our Sunday openings. General repairs to the Hannan House continue under the guidance of Don Sparling and Larry Gibbons. Larry recently replaced the front door lock in the Hannan House, saving us the expense of a locksmith.

Thanks to Susan Gardner, our publicity lead, the Museum is being featured on the cover of Gold Coast Living along with an excellent article highlighting the Museum's activities.

In the meantime, we are continuing with our core mission of documenting the history and preserving historical artifacts in our archive program. We continue to educate the public by providing docent guided tours of our three historic structures every Sunday from 1-4 PM from April through October, and providing tours for local elementary school children.

We do have an ongoing need for volunteers to assist and lead our programs. It's a great time to get involved with the Museum. Come join us...it's fun and you'll meet a lot of interesting people here at the museum and from all over the globe who come visit us.

Finally, I'm excited to welcome three new volunteers, Emily Pate, who is helping in the archives, Kristina Walters, who has trained as a docent, and Max Sienkiewicz, who is enhancing our social media presence. Welcome aboard!

Looking forward to seeing you at the Museum. If you have any comments or suggestions, please drop me a note. I can be reached via email at BothellMuseum@gmail.com.

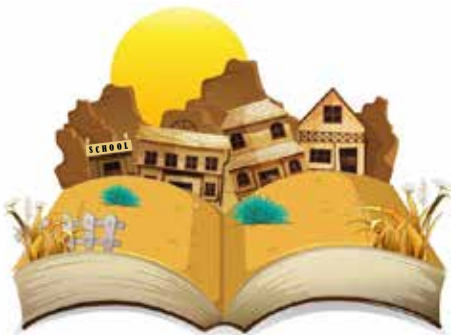


Window Display...Main Street General Stores

Mary Anne Gibbons and friends create displays for the parlor windows. Thus, visitors to the park can learn a bit about Bothell's history when the Museum isn't open. Currently (but not for much longer) the display features three stores on Main Street at the turn of the last century. *Photos by Thiviya Ganesharaja*



Objects from the Museum buildings were also incorporated into the displays.



Max Sienkiewicz

Hi everyone! My name is Max and I am a recent graduate from Gonzaga University with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science. Bothell has been my home for my entire life and I am very dedicated to preserving its beauty and rich local history. In the fall I will be attending the University of Chicago to obtain my Master of Arts degree in the Social Sciences, with a concentration in History.

My ultimate goal is to earn a Ph.D. in History and teach at the college level, with a special focus on local and cultural history. This desire is what drew me to the local Bothell Historical Museum, whose work closely resembles the kind of community engagement and scholarship that I hope to pursue.

My role at the museum is primarily going to involve the upkeep of the social media presence. Aside from that, I will be assisting the volunteers in some docent work, archival research, and in the writing of grant proposals.

If you have any questions for me I can be reached at: msienkiewicz1243@gmail.com

Meet a Volunteer

New docents and volunteers have recently come on board. If you are interested in trying on the docent role, there is training by reading brief documents, then jumping in and learning on the job. There are new discoveries with each shift. Docents are needed for Sundays and specialty tours. Are you in?

In this issue, please meet new volunteer Max, in his own words...

Top Hats

by Larry & Mary Anne Gibbons

One of the many really special items the Museum has for display is the Beaver Silk Hat that George Bothell wore to Olympia in 1889 when Washington became a state. He served in the legislature at that time.

The hat was made by the Knox Hat Company in New York City. It was founded by Irish immigrant Charles Knox in lower Manhattan in 1838. He sold beaver hats throughout America. His son Edward (1842-1916) took over the business in 1878

and decided that the company should expand to include manufacturing. In 1890, he built the Knox Hat Factory, designed by architect B. Finkenseiper. The factory had a four-faced clock tower and a mansard roof...the largest hat factory in the world. The factory remained in operation until after World War II, when it was abandoned and fell into disrepair. Edward Knox later built a new store and headquarters on Fifth Avenue, marking the company's continued success and prestige.



They sold hats to 23 presidents including Abraham Lincoln. In fact, he purchased a new one right before his 1860 speech at the Cooper Institute ["Lincoln's watershed, the event that transformed him from a regional leader into a national phenomenon."—Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer] They also sold wom-



George & Alice Bothell

en's and children's hats.

In 1932, in the throes of the Great Depression, John Cavanagh, a respected figure in the hat-making

arena, took the initiative to consolidate his brands with those of Knox and Dunlap. This move resulted in the formation of the Hat Corporation of America.

Despite the merger, both Knox and Cavanagh chose to continue using their individual labels. This decision underscored their personal brand power and the consumer loyalty they had managed to foster over the years.



The hats were made of felted beaver fur. Beaver was perfectly suited for the felting process because the soft underfur of the pelt — the beaver wool or *duvet* — was barbed and hence naturally cohesive. Prime beaver fur with which to make felted beaver hats came from beaver trapped in the winter months. The pelts were then nailed to a stretch board to dry into an oval shape.

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Beaver stretch board found in the Beckstrom cabin.

Beaver fur consists of two types of hair, the coarse outer guard hair and the soft underfur, called beaver wool. The guard hairs were pulled out; then the beaver wool was torn or shaved off of the pelt. Once removed from the pelt, the resulting balls of beaver wool were referred to as beaver fluff. Further processing removed the keratin residue to facilitate the interlocking of the fibers during felting. Felting processes applied moisture and agitation to fur or fibers such that they would tangle and shrink together to create a pliable piece of material. These felts were then stretched tightly over wooden molds to be shaped and dried.

The finished product was not only waterproof but resilient. Felted beaver hats held their shape and color longer than those made from any other fur or woven cloth product on the market.

Some interesting facts about Lincoln that we have learned from our son-in-law, Peter Robinson Brown, a great grandson of Charles Knox. Lincoln was very tall and it was suspected that he might have had a hereditary disease: Marfan syndrome. He was 6'4" tall. The Knox Hat Co. designed a special low chair for him to sit in while they fit him for hats. The chair still remains in the family. Unfortunately, Peter was not the one to inherit this much desired item. Instead of carrying a briefcase, Lincoln carried his important papers in his hat.

Edward Knox served in the Civil War. He was personally recommended by President Lincoln for a leadership position in the Union Army. During the Battle of Gettysburg he was injured and received the U.S. military's highest decoration—the Medal of Honor (2 July 1863).

“Mad as a Hatter” may have its origins in the mercury poisoning of hatmakers in the 18th and 19th-centuries. Mercury was often used in the production of beaver felt. Long-term use of mercury products often resulted in erethism which was characterized by slurred speech, tremors, stumbling and, in extreme cases, hallucinations. *Wikipedia*



This hat is in the upstairs hallway. Sometimes kids try it on and even most of their heads are too large. Also shown: inside of the hat and the inside rim label.



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The Bothell Historical Museum thanks our business members and partners for their support. If you would like to aid in the Museum's preservation and telling of Bothell's history, join us! For more information, email us at BothellMuseum@gmail.com

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