

Tumwater Historical Association

Volume 30, Issue 2

Your Community is Your Heritage!

Fall 2011

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

**2nd & 4th Mondays—
Homestead Quilters**— Tumwater
Methodist Church, 12:30-2:30
pm

**2nd Thursday —THA Board
Meetings**—Schmidt House,
5:00—6:20 pm

**8/21—Preserving the Harvest,
Drying Flowers, Herbs & Fruits**—
Crosby House, 1-4

**8/27—Nelson Family/Spirlock
Farm 150th Anniversary**

9/18—Welcome Homesteaders

**9/18 —Cordelia's Birthday &
Games of the Period,**—Crosby
House, 1-4 pm

**10/2 —Cider Sunday, THA
Homesteaders & TC 1875-
1900**— Tumwater Falls Park

**10/16 —Enjoying the Harvest,
Special Music Literary Read-
ings**— Crosby House, 1-4

10/29 —Quilters Getaway—
Olympics West, 9-4 pm

**November—March —Crosby
House CLOSED** for the Winter

12/4 —THA Annual Meeting

JESSE FERGUSON AS PATRIARCH

—By Don Trosper

In recent issues of our THA newsletter I've been focusing on the history of local businesses. I plan to continue that series in future issues, but this time I thought I'd share something from my research regarding someone who was close to the Trosper family, Uncle Jesse Ferguson. I was inspired by a nice biographical piece put together by Mark Bowns (which you can find on the internet at: www.start-wa.com/ferguson.html). I found some additional information that I forwarded to Mark which I found in the "Washington Standard" newspaper from 1898. It really shows an aspect of the culture and attitudes of the founders of our historic community.

By 1898 Jesse Ferguson was in his senior stage of life as one of the last of the original Simmons/Bush party of Tumwater founders on that 1844/45 wagon train that came across the Oregon Trail to eventually settle and form the settlement that we now know as Tumwater. He was

viewed by his neighbors as a "venerable pioneer" and "patriarch of the Belmore community", Belmore being the area southwest of Tumwater that included Jesse's original claim and reached west towards Black Lake. Jesse's home was located roughly where Tumwater Middle School now sits. In fact one short note from John Miller Murphy's newspaper in 1898 mentioned a party that was given at Uncle Jesse Ferguson's home "at which music and dancing was the principle amusement". Another short article from that year mentioned that Ferguson offered a piece of land as a site for a possible public hall for Belmore if enough money could be raised for a suitable building. A cake walk was planned, but I found no follow up article saying whether the proposal was ever fulfilled.

Jesse's character was revealed quite well in a longer article I found in the February 4th issue of the "Washington Standard". As the patriarch of the community, Jesse was

approached with a somewhat scandalous personal situation involving a young 17 year old girl named Ida. She was adopted by a couple named Robinson who had just arrived from a brief residence in California. The adoptive parents wanted to give her hand in marriage to a man they met in California named W. J. Marshall who wanted to take young Ida with him to the Klondike. The girl said that she did not want this arrangement of marriage and that Marshall was suspicious that Marshall wanted to "make her personal charms the object of barter amid the unconventional habits of camp life"; in other words, to force her into prostitution. Jesse came to her defense. He spirited her away from her foster parents' home on a Saturday morning and placed her in charge of Jesse's married daughter, Mrs. Lee. Naturally the adoptive parents were incensed at the abduction, as was Mr. Marshall the prospective bridegroom. They finally dis-

(Continued on page 2)

THURSTON COUNTY THROUGH THE DECADES—By Anne Kelleber

A Successful Celebration of 1850-1875!

The second program in the Through the Decades series took place in Tenino on May 14. Under sunny skies, THA, joined by twenty-one other historical entities, portrayed

life as Thurston County knew it in the years 1850-1875. There was rope making, mountain man gear, laundry with scrub board and lye soap, shake splitting, hand-made quilts, a pioneer schoolhouse, appearances by Willis Boatman from Puyallup and

Dr. Tolmie from Fort Nisqually, period music, period clothing—and even period goodies to eat. THA, decked out in their beautiful new old clothes (see picture), co-hosted the event, along with the South Thurston County Historical

(Continued on page 4)

HISTORICAL GREETINGS TO YOU!

—BY DON TROSPER, PRESIDENT

I don't know for certain, but it seems that this summer is a busier time for the historical association than in summers past. Usually we're on vacations, prepping for a quilt display at the county fair, and otherwise just getting ready for our annual fall events. This year, though, it is more than that. Could it be because our board now has period costuming? That may be a part of it, but it just seems to be a time of historic awareness and celebrations.

A few of us went up in costume to the State Museum in Tacoma to honor the history teacher of the year, our very own Bob Cooksey. It was a wonderful event and we're so proud of Bob and the

Homesteader's program and all the volunteers and students over the years. I got to spend a few hours in July signing Tumwater history books at the Tumwater Costco in costume. Some of us appeared at the Tenino Oregon Trail Days in costume. We're making final plans for participation in the Nelson family/Spirlock farm 150th anniversary on August 27th just off old Highway 99 halfway to Tenino, planning for a potential celebration at the site of the Bush farm sometime in September, and continuing to work on our semi-annual "Thurston County Through the Decades" event in conjunction this October with our Cider Sunday Homesteader's event and the Thurston County Birthday party. That event will involve

many local history groups and will be held in the Falls Park below the Falls Terrace Restaurant on October 2nd. Oh yes, all of this, 'in costume'! I almost hesitate to mention this, but if your community group is interested in having me or a few of us in the association come speak on Tumwater history in costume, we could be available if we have some lead time. Give us a call (943-6951) and we'll see what can be arranged.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter, oh, and by the way, Happy 50th Birthday to Tumwater High School in September! Saturday, Sept. 17th is an open house with a program at the stadium at 1:00 p.m.

"Lost! Lost!

*A Deringer pistol,
between this place and
Tumwater, about ten or
twelve days from this
date. The finder will be
liberally rewarded by
leaving the property at
this office."*

—Washington
Standard, August 31,
1861

COWLITZ TRAIL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

—BY CHUCK HORNBUCKLE

A Scoping meeting held at Fort Vancouver gives us hope the Cowlitz Trail will finally gain recognition.

The June 3rd meeting hosted by National Parks Service representatives was authorized by the last Congress to seek public input for including up to 64 new emigrant trails under the National Historic Trails Act of 1968. In addition to the Cowlitz Trail, first used by the Simmons-Bush party in 1845, the Naches Pass Route will be considered for addition to the 1968 National Trails Act.

A group of five Oregon-California Trails Association (OCTA) members attended the meeting. Four of the members were there to represent the Naches Pass Route while Chuck Hornbuckle both an OCTA and THA member represented the Cowlitz Trail.

Chuck's effort to gain recognition of the Cowlitz Trail started in 2003 when he sought and received support letters from 17 State and local offices as well as all historic groups in Cowlitz, Lewis and Thurston Counties.

Since that time he has gathered considerable documentation of the pioneer route from Fort Vancouver to Puget Sound. A copy of that documentation was provided to the NPS representatives which, they said, "- is just what we are looking for." Final word from the NPS will hinge on Congressional action expected in July 2012.

Chuck and Suzanne have led numerous auto tours of the Cowlitz Trail as part of their OCTA programs. His "Cowlitz Trail Auto Tour Guide" booklet provides directions, historic comments and numerous pho-

tos of all trail markers along the 100-mile route.

Additional information on the Cowlitz Trail as well as membership applications for THA and OCTA are available by mail to: THA, P.O. Box 4315, Tumwater, WA 98501-0315.

JESSE FERGSON

(Continued from page 1)

covered where she was staying and tried to coax her with "words of honey and professions of peace". Meanwhile Marshall made threats toward Jesse and others, for which he was brought before Justice King on a Monday afternoon and put in jail under a \$300 bond. The Robinsons left for Alaska by Wednesday, leaving the daughter in the charge of her new friends and rescuers. Her honor was left intact and it was a happy ending, thanks to the efforts of Jesse Ferguson.

THA HOMESTEAD QUILTERS' NEWS

—BY KATHLEEN KOONTZ

THA quilters have concluded our 2010-11 quilt year and are ready to tackle summer and fall activities.

Our 2011 Charm Quilt fund raiser has been completed and tickets are available at all of our events from THA members. We had a bonnet making day in April hosted by Keita Laine and made bonnets of every hue. They were very popular at the Pioneer Fair and over half of them were sold. We are preparing to go to the Thurston County Fair on August 3 to demo and share our quilts. Our annual Quilters' Picnic will be August 22 at 11:30 am. Call for details.

TMS Homesteader students produced an outstanding Crazy Quilt with embroidery and em-

bellishments which exceeded expectations!! We certainly had some talented young women work on this project. MANY THANKS to THA quilters and community members who came out for early morning class to help the girls with this project.

Stars will be the theme for the THA 2012 fundraiser quilt. Our quilters are already at work constructing the blocks and are quite enthused about this pattern. More details later.

Save October 29, 9 am to 4 pm, for our annual QUILTERS' GETAWAY DAY which is graciously hosted by Olympics West. It is a day to start/complete projects, visit, share tips, enjoy a bed turning, ex-

change fabrics/patterns, win a door prize and just have a great day out. It is \$5.00 to register and if you need sewing machine space you must indicate that so that a space can be assigned. Please call for details and/or watch for flyers.

Our fall quilting Mondays will be September 12 & 26, October 10 & 24, November 14 & 28 and December 12. We quilt at Tumwater Methodist Church, 12:30 to 2:30 pm. All are welcome, experience not required, just an interest in quilting.

If you have any questions please call 943-7527 or 943-1383.

“Married. At the residence of the bride’s father at Grand Mound Prairie, Washington Territory, on Sunday, 8th September, by the Reverend T.J. Harper, Mr. JOSEPH KELLET, of Olympia, to Miss REBECCA D., youngest daughter of ASHEL SARGENT.

In wishing our friends long life and a happy one, we are gratified to add that we only echo the sentiments of a large and respectable circle of friends and acquaintances.”

—Overland Press, September 9, 1861

CROSBY HOUSE ACTIVITIES

—BY BEV YORK (AKA: MRS. MARY LINCOLN CROSBY)

On April 21, 1861, Fort Sumter was fired upon in the east. We hope this will not continue into a War Between the States. Colonel Silas Casey (Ted Saylor) from Fort Steilacoom was our guest for supper in June and assured us of the safe passage of our ships carrying cargo and passengers from the east. It is treacherous enough to go around the Horn, without the added concern of armed conflict. These are some of the concerns, as the Crosby Family and their neighbors work to nourish a thriving community in the northwest.



Colonel Silas Casey from Fort Steilacoom (portrayed by local re-enactor, Ted Saylor)

The Gardens are coming along very nicely, under the hand of Master Gardener Connie Barclay and many other "elves" who stop by to work on the gardens. The Herb Garden is taking shape

The Crosby's, neighbors and Colonel Casey



and has rocks with the names of the plants to help visitors identify what they are viewing.

All are invited to our Living History Program with reenactors portraying Crosby family members, the 3rd Sunday of each month from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.

Upcoming Special Sundays will be:

- August 21st Preserving the harvests, drying flowers (come see why/how), herbs & fruits;
- September 18th for Cordelia's Birthday & Games of the Period; and
- October 16th Enjoying the harvests, Special Music from the time & Literary Readings as the family entertained in the parlor. Louisa Crosby will read some amusing works from Jane Austin, her favorite author.

TMS HOMESTEADER PROGRAM

—BY ROBERT COOKSEY, ALIAS CAPTAIN MCALLISTER

“UP TO
CHAUFFEUR—
Deputy Sheriff
McCorkle with his
motor cycle built for two,
brought Elmer Pease, a
well-known young
millman into the city
today to answer to the
charge of speeding an
automobile through
Tumwater. The
complaint was sworn to
before Justice of the
Peace Walter Crosby by
Walton Bloom charging
that the automobile
frightened his team of
horses, causing them to
run away. The hearing
was set for July 13 and
Pease was admitted to
bail in the sum of
\$100.”

—Morning Olympian,
July 1, 1911

As we start the 23rd year of the homesteader program, it is interesting to take a look back over the years. This program which started as a centennial project to educate students about the heritage of Tumwater, and the pioneers that started this community, was initially to last only one year. The student response in that first year was so overwhelming the decision was made to continue. Over the years more than 1300 students have participated in the homesteader program, studied the rich heritage of Tumwater, and how the individual pioneers endured the early hardships in what was then the Oregon Country. While those students who are not homesteaders do not participate in the intensive research, workshops, and outside of school curriculum study of Tumwater History they do get as much as can be integrated into the normal curriculum. An integral part of the homesteader program is to connect to the city they are part of by giving back to that community. Students agree to participate in a minimum of two community service projects during the school year, wear-

ing period appropriate clothing, each of which involves a pioneer task or event.

We start each year with the welcome by the Tumwater Historical Association. This year we are working on creating a unique welcome for the homesteader class of 2011/2012, to be held September 18th at the site of the Historic Bush Homestead in Tumwater. Ray Egan has offered to make an appearance as Ezra Meeker, and provide the homesteaders and their families his reminisces of his personal friend George Washington Bush. This should provide a rousing start to the school year, and great introduction to George Bush, a major personality in the New Market community.

After the initial welcome we quickly get into the first of the community service events, “Cider Sunday”. Students perform an appropriate fall harvest activity the first weekend of October by pressing cider using 1800’s technology, (that means only hand powered cider presses). Students have a short break until the next event in early December, which is the annual fat

rendering event, also known as candle making. Students actually spend the entire day braving the elements outside, like true pioneers, making tallow. The last event Pioneer Fair, the Saturday after Memorial Day is the culmination of a year full of research and learning pioneer language, first person re-enactment techniques, and developing a pioneer persona (as a member of an original Tumwater pioneer family). What many don’t realize is that for two days prior to the Pioneer Fair community service, students will have performed a more intensive re-enactment for the 4th grade students in the Tumwater School District. Many of the students have siblings who attend these schools, and as always, parents and families are encouraged to visit and watch their homesteader in action. By doing these additional performances, the homesteader students also plant the seeds of the importance of knowing the history and heritage of your community with the next generation of homesteaders.

See Tumwater Middle School Homesteader Students in Photo Gallery on page 6.

THROUGH THE DECADES, CONT.

Continued from Page 1

Society of Tenino, and a wonderful historical time was had by all.

1875-1900 Coming on October 2!

As THA prepares for the third program in this series, we are happy to announce that, for this event, one of our major partners will be the Thurston County Historic Commission. In combination with the Home-

steader/THA annual Cider Sunday, The Historic Commission will present its annual Thurston County Birthday Party with the theme of agriculture in Thurston County. Crops, barns, granges, and farm tools will be the order of the day. All other historical associations in Thurston County have been invited to participate, as well. This program will take place on Sunday, October 2, at Tumwater Falls Park, from 10 am to 4 pm.

Cider pressing of your own apples and pears for \$3.00 a gallon will be done by the Tumwater Middle School Homesteaders. Other activities representative of the late 19th century will tentatively include developments in the areas of transportation, mail service and newspaper publishing, the battle over the state capital site, and the beginnings of some of our local industries.



New Market Homestead Cider Sunday



With our very own Tumwater Middle School Homesteaders

Cider pressing the old-fashioned way with apples and pears from your own overburdened trees.
You bring the fruit and the jugs—the Homesteaders will do the pressing and the cost is just \$3.00 per gallon.

Thurston County Through The Decades . . . 1875-1900

A series of events highlighting each quarter century of Thurston County History which began in October, 2010 with the 1825-1850 period, highlighted the 1850-1875 period in May 2011, and now celebrating 1875-1900!



Thurston County Birthday Celebration



Capital County in Washington State Established 1852

Birthday Cake and other Refreshments Coloring Contest with Prizes

Three Exciting Events All Rolled Into One!
Sunday, October 2, 2011—Tumwater Falls Park
10:00 am—4:00 pm

Featuring

- Rope making and other hands-on children's activities
- Letter writing and posting 1875 style
- Period music by local musicians
- Re-enactors in period clothing
- Foods and inventions during this time
- Local businesses which began during this era
- Farms, Granges, Barns and all things agricultural
- Cider pressing of your own apples and pears
- Apple Treats and Refreshments—THA Country Café
- Handmade quilts, old fashioned toys—THA Store
- Salmon viewing activities
- Local railroad history



Invited Groups Include

- Bigelow House
- Lacey Historical Commission
- Olympia Tumwater Foundation
- St. Martins University
- Olympia Historical Society
- Washington State Library
- Washington State Archives
- Crosby House
- South Thurston County Historical Society
- Nisqually Indian Tribe
- SPSCC Archaeology Dept.
- Tumwater Historical Association
- Tumwater Middle School
- Thurston County Historical Commission
- And Others

Bring the whole family and join us
for a wonderful day at Tumwater Falls Park.
Call Grandma and Grandpa, your Uncles and Aunts,
Cousins, and Neighbors . . . Make it a Family Affair!

Don't forget your apples and pears!

See you Sunday, October 2nd!!!!

PHOTO GALLERY . . . THA IN ACTION!

Thurston County Through The Decades . . . 1850-1875 . . . May 2011



Corinne Tobeck, Rosalyn Tobeck & Bev York



Top—Bev York, Don Trosper, Chuck & Suzanne Hornbuckle, Dave Shade, Sandi Gray, Karen Johnson, Bob Cooksey, Gail Tracy, & Corinne Tobeck
Bottom— Jeanette Mary, Anne Kelleher & Rosalyn Tobeck



Anne Kelleher's Laundry Demonstration

Tumwater Middle School Homesteaders *What a great way to learn the history of Tumwater!!!*

Oregon Trail Days — August 2011



Nalani Matautia & Rosalyn Tobeck



Thurston County Fair — August 2011



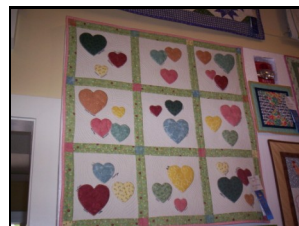
Sandi Gray Proudly Displays 1863 Era Gown She Made for Corinne Tobeck



Verna Cooksey, Gail Tracy & Joanne Baxter



THA Quilter's Quilt on Display



Heart & Flag Quilts Made & Displayed by Jeanette Mary.

NEW THA MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

—BY CHUCK HORNBUCKLE

Want to avoid the hassle of annual THA membership renewal along with dues increases?

During their June meeting Board members authorized a life membership category similar to what other groups enjoy.

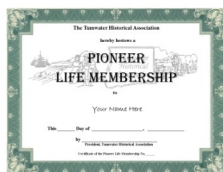
The new category has been designated as the "Pioneer Life Membership" honoring those hardy emigrants who settled the Thurston County area. Lifetime members will receive a numbered Certificate appropriate for framing. A copy of the Certificate is shown below.

The Board also set lifetime dues at 20 times the category dues. For example, if you join or renew as an individual the

dues would be 20 times \$20 or \$400. If you are over 65 the dues would be 20 times \$10 or \$200.

Join or renew between now and January 31, 2012 and receive a 10-percent discount.

As a new member you will receive the new and expanded THA Newsletter containing local history articles and announcements of future activities such as our annual Pioneer Fair, Cider Sunday, the "Thurston County thru the Decades" series, and more.



THA Annual Dues

- Individual \$20
- Family (Household) \$25
- Senior Citizen/Student . \$10
- Business \$50
- Contributing Friend 50+
- Lifetime—Individual . . . \$400
- Lifetime-Senior (65) . . . \$200
- Estate Planning, (Information available upon request)

THA Membership

"Your Community Is Your Heritage!"

Join THA today!

For an application write or call

THA Membership
P.O. Box 4315
Tumwater, WA
98501-0315

(360) 943-6951

WELCOME TO THA!

New Members

- Jerad & Melissa Koepf
- Clara Keller
- Ryan & Huong Nabors
- Vila & George Narazonick
- Eugene Smith
- Olympia-Tumwater Foundation

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR DUES!

Renewals

- Gail & Ted Dahm
- Brian Dwyer
- Sandi & Ron Gray
- Mr. & Mrs. Ed LeRiche
- Suzanne & Chuck Hornbuckle
- Jean Jackson
- Carol Juris & Doug Hunter
- Paul Longcrier
- Jeanette & Rod Mary
- Robert Meyer
- Nadine & John Murphy
- Weldon Rau
- Ed Stanley
- Ken Thompson
- Corinne & Vernon Tobeck
- Debbie & Don Trosper
- Shirley Trosper
- Linda Tunison
- Virginia Nelson
- Henderson House Museum

TUMWATER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 4315 TUMWATER WA 98501-0315
 (360) 943-6951

MISSION

"The Tumwater Historical Association is organized for educational and cultural purposes relating to the history of the Tumwater area, its life and people."

The Tumwater Historical Association (THA) is an active organization that was incorporated on October 2, 1981 with 200 charter members. THA is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization governed by the board of directors. The board generally meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Schmidt House in Tumwater, starting at 5:00 PM.

THA offers a variety of activities funded through membership dues, grants, donation, and entry fees. THA offers its members and the community the opportunity to partake in a variety of historical and education activities, such as:

- Pioneer Fair
- Cider Sunday
- THA Country Store
- Historical Field Trips
- Oral History Program
- THA Homestead Quilters
- Heritage/Living History Programs
- New Market Homestead Living History Museum

Call (360) 943-6951 or send an e-mail to ctobeck@comcast.net to request information about any of the above activities or to learn how you, too, can become a member of the Tumwater Historical Association.

"Your Community is Your Heritage!"

The Tumwater Historical Association Board of Directors Thanks You for Your Membership In THA!

THA Motto

*"Your Community is
Your Heritage"*



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Ph (360) 943-6951
Corinne M. Tobeck, Editor

THA Website!
[www.tumwaterhistorical
association.org](http://www.tumwaterhistoricalassociation.org)

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NELSON FAMILY FARM CELEBRATING 150 YEARS!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 27, 2011

1-4 PM

3624 WALDRICK ROAD SE, OLYMPIA

HAYRIDES, BARN & VINEYARD TOURS,
HERITAGE DISPLAYS & MUSIC

James Spirlock was a livestock trader who came to Washington from the California gold fields. He bought cattle from all over the territory and drove them to Olympia where he loaded them on barges for shipment to Canada. Spirlock acquired his first land on Rocky Prairie in 1861 when he paid \$24.97 for 190.98 acres of land that had been selected by Washington Territory as part of its grant to support a university in the state. He began to clear and farm the land. Spirlock married a neighbor, Cordella Ricker Plumb, and they had five daughters. Two daughters married Swedish immigrants who worked on the farm, Andrew and Gust Nelson.