

Footprints

on the sands of time....

ISSUE XXXIII

SOUTHWEST SEATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 1996

A 'Landmark' Event

Celebration planned as Society prepares to break ground at the Log House Museum

Our Society's Log House Museum will enter a new phase in its development this fall, as construction crews begin the task of replacing some of the building's 92-year-old logs and stabilizing the foundation.

In recognition of that milestone, the Southwest Seattle Historical Society will hold a "Log Blessing" at the site on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 1:30 to 2 p.m. All Society members are encouraged to attend the ceremony, which will be led by Duwamish Tribe member **James Rasmussen**.

The event will also mark the 145th anniversary of the Nov. 13, 1851, landing of the Denny Party at Alki, and several descendants of Seattle's pioneer families are expected to take part in the historic occasion.

Following months of planning by architect **David Leavengood**, construction permits for the Log House were obtained in August and bids requested in September. Plans call for the contract to be awarded and work to begin by early November.

Initial construction work will focus on the building's first floor, with the removal and replacement of the largely decayed south wall. At the same time, the west wall will be restored to its original condition. While the

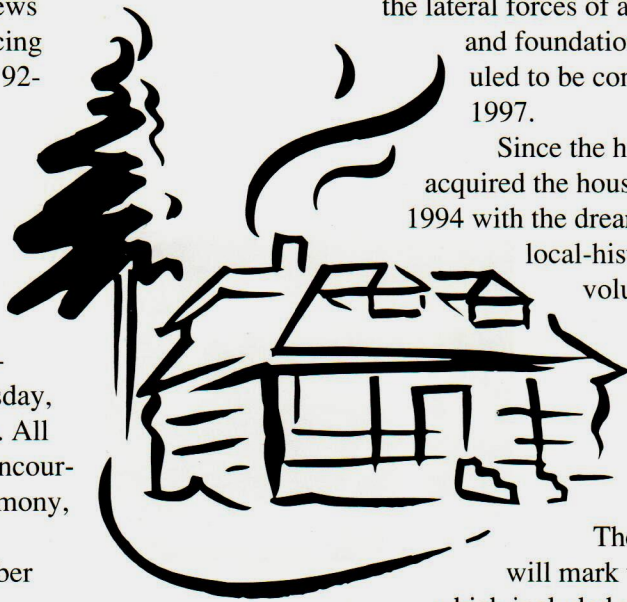
logs are replaced, crews will strengthen the foundation to enable the building to withstand the lateral forces of an earthquake. Log and foundation work is scheduled to be completed in January 1997.

Since the historical society acquired the house in December 1994 with the dream of establishing a local-history museum, volunteers have

poured hundreds of hours into raising funds and developing a multi-phase development plan.

The Nov. 12 event will mark the end of Phase I, which included acquisition of the house, architectural design work, education program development and designation of the house as an historic landmark.

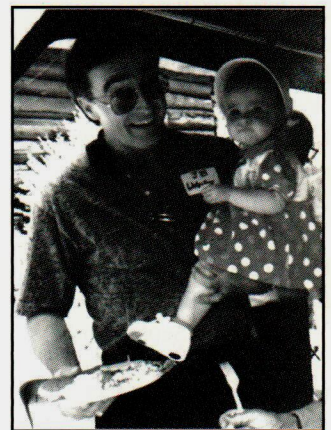
Phase II will focus on the log and foundation work. Phase III – which will culminate with the Log House Museum's grand opening on Nov. 13, 1997 – will involve renovating the building's first-floor exhibit space; converting the second floor into offices, a storage room and a small library; replacing the current garage with a building that will house restrooms and a small gift shop; landscaping the grounds with native trees and plants; and installing the museum's opening exhibit.



Cooper
Don't miss Nov. 16 Annual Meeting (page 2)

Video to focus on Alki's place in history (page 2)

Society hires its first staff member – Director Julie Davis. (page 3)



Room for dessert? Feast your eyes on photos of the Society's annual picnic & the Hi-Yu parade (pages 6 and 7)

Video to focus on Alki's place in history

A few weeks from now, around Thanksgiving, B.J. Bullert will board a plane in Allentown, Penn., and fly home to Seattle.

If she has her way, the weather will be perfectly awful when she arrives.

"I'm hoping that we're going to have some really stormy weather," the West Seattle native and historical society member says. "You know – cold and rainy and miserable."

Chances are she'll get her wish, and the video she is producing about the landing of Seattle's pioneers at Alki will have just the authentic feel she's shooting for.

The video – which will tell the story of Alki from its role as the "Birthplace of Seattle" up to shortly after the turn of the century – promises to be a centerpiece of the Log House Museum when it opens to the public in November 1997.

One of B.J.'s goals as videographer is to breathe new life into the familiar story of the Denny Party's rain-soaked landing at Alki on Nov. 13, 1851. That will mean looking not only at the experience of the white settlers, but of the Duwamish Tribe as well. It will also mean telling a more colorful and complex story than the textbook version many Seattleites learned in school.

"In November, when I come back, I want to shoot scenes that can be used for the landing that will convey not just the coldness

and the severity of that experience, but also the esthetics and the beauty of it," she says.

"There are two stories of the pioneers' experience here," she continues. "One is the story that is associated mostly with the landing, which is the story of the women arriving, crying, Arthur Denny feeling terribly miserable about the whole thing . . . really kind of a wretched, horrible, awful story. Then there is the story of Louisa Boren. When she landed, sure it was raining and it was pouring and it was cold, but she had a sense of wonder about this place."

In contrast to Arthur and other settlers, who saw land as something to be surveyed and tamed, Louisa – like the Duwamish people – had an "affinity to the natural world," B.J. says.

To convey the "sensual and rich and pristine quality" of Alki in the 1850s, B.J. plans to shoot much of the footage in film rather than videotape. Already, she's captured some "hauntingly beautiful" scenes in Schmitz Park. She also plans to use film for the landing sequence, which she envisions as a series of "discrete moments" rather than a re-enactment.

"I think that for this film, in order to get a viewer to really become involved, I can't just do the literal thing," she says. "Nobody would believe it."

The video, which has received \$3,800 in funding from King County and \$3,920 from the Washington Commission for the Humanities, will require another \$24,000 to complete.

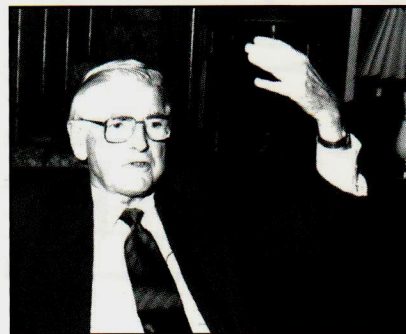
B.J., who teaches communications courses at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, is hopeful that a grant will surface before she returns home.

She's also got her fingers crossed for bad weather.

"You know that feeling when you take a step into a mud puddle and the mud goes in your shoe?" she says. "I'd like to get one of those shots."



photos by Deborah Mendenhall
B.J. Bullert and cameraman Phil Sturholm prepare to videotape an interview with pioneer descendent Brewster Denny (below right). Other interviewees include Duwamish Tribemember James Rasmussen.



Big broadcasts:

Robinson video airs in New York, Chicago

"Ballad of an American," B.J. Bullert's documentary on the life of legendary folk singer (and West Seattle native) Earl Robinson, aired on two of the top public TV stations in the nation in September.

WTTW in Chicago broadcast the video on Sept. 3. WNET in New York aired it Sept. 6 and 8.

The video's premier broadcast was April 27, 1994, on KCTS, Seattle.

Annual Meeting will feature clips from 'Birthplace' video

Our Society's annual membership meeting will take place Saturday, Nov. 16, 10 a.m. to noon at South Seattle Community college, Room RS79.

In addition to election of executive board

members, the agenda will include a sneak preview of clips from B.J. Bullert's "Birthplace of Seattle" video.

Questions? Call the Log House Museum, 938-5293.

President's message:

Society undergoing dramatic growth and change

By Arlene Wade
SWSHS President

In November we celebrate a banner year in our Society's history and the 145th anniversary of the landing of the Denny Party. After successfully raising the funds and finally obtaining building permits, Phase I of construction on the Log House is under way.

Please join us at the Log House on Tuesday, Nov. 12 at 1:30 for a sacred Duwamish Blessing of the site. Alki Elementary School children will also perform excerpts from a play by **Colleen Dumas** that commemorates our city's origins from the differing views of a young Duwamish boy and little Louisa Denny.

Local residents **Martha Kongsgaard** and **Peter Goldman** of the Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation have generously underwritten an invitational luncheon at the Alki Homestead Restaurant preceding the ceremonies. Political and heritage community leaders will join us in honoring major contributors from the six top Circle of Giving categories (please see the insert in this newsletter). Without their support, we could not have raised the \$132,000 needed for the initial log and foundation work.

As our Society proceeds to make the Birthplace of Seattle Log House Museum a reality, it is undergoing dramatic growth and

change. Our membership has increased to 300, the Board has expanded from 11 to 14 members and recently we hired West Seattle resident **Julie Davis** as part-time executive director. We are so fortunate to have someone with her administrative, heritage and legal background assuming a leadership role in creating the museum. We are also excited to have **Brad Chrisman** as our new exhibit design coordinator. His passion and knowledge about local history comes from his work on West Side Story.

I wish to thank Chairperson **Linda Chase**, her dedicated Education Committee, historian **Greg Watson**, author **Colleen Dumas** and many volunteers for completing the King County-funded Education Kits after a year of intense research and hard work. The kits are now being piloted in Alki Elementary School and Madison Middle School.

Our efforts have not been unrecognized. This past year our new identity and logo by Gable Design and **Rosemary Wood** received a national award. The State Heritage Center recently ranked our project proposal fourth out of 69 statewide applicants competing for preservation project funding in the next biennium budget. Finally, the Mountains to Sound Greenway extended its boundaries to terminate at Alki and the Birthplace of Seattle Log House Museum. This establishes a mutually beneficial relationship between two organizations, both dedicated to preservation.

As we prepare to celebrate these significant accomplishments, plans are under way to meet our next objectives. We need to raise the final \$157,000 to fund the following: log house interior and exterior renovation, landscaping, construction of an annex in place of
(continued on page 8)



Society welcomes Julie Davis as interim director

You can add one more item to the list of important milestones our Society has achieved in 1996.

In September, the SWSHS hired its first-ever staff member – interim director **Julie Davis**.

A former Seattle City Council assistant and political campaign manager with a strong background in historic preservation, fund-raising and community work, Davis said she's excited about her new position.

"The Log House Museum is an important undertaking for West Seattle; an opportunity

to bring our community together and strengthen it," the Arbor Heights resident said. "The museum will provide each of us with opportunities to be stewards of our community, creating an important legacy for future generations."

Davis holds a law degree from the University of Oregon School of Law. She also earned a B.A. in Russian/Eastern European Studies from the Univ. of Vermont.

Society members may contact Davis by calling the Log House Museum at 938-5293.

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REMEMBERING THE King & Winge

For 80 years, she weathered every storm the Pacific Ocean could throw at her.

After just one more season on the Bering Sea, the King & Winge was destined to return home to West Seattle, where she was built in 1914 by the King & Winge shipbuilding company.

Carl D. Winge – whose uncle Albert Winge was part-owner of that historic shipyard – dreamed of mooring the 96-foot vessel at the Port of Seattle’s proposed Pier 1 park, where she could tell her story to future generations.

“We were trying to get the owner to sell it so that we could restore it and put it on exhibit at Pier 1,” he says.

“But he said, you know, ‘One more season.’”

“Well, that was the last season.”

On Feb. 23, 1994, the King & Winge went down while loading crab off the Aleutian Islands.

“They got in really heavy weather. Water started coming over, and they couldn’t get the

bilge pump working,” says Winge, who has a videotape that someone made of the vessel’s final moments. “It didn’t capsize. It just gradually went nose down. The last thing you see is the rudder straight up in the air.”

Powered by a 140-horsepower gas engine (the sails were rarely used), the King & Winge was built to work in the Alaska halibut fishery, but by the time she was launched on March 18, 1914, a new generation of diesel-powered schooners was taking over the halibut business.

No matter. Tom King and Albert Winge had built their namesake vessel well, using oversized timbers, extra-thick planking and a hull sheathed in ironbark, a hardwood from Australia. The sturdy design proved to be adaptable for a remarkable variety of duties.

On her maiden voyage for example, the King & Winge crossed arctic waters to reach a ship that had become trapped in the ice, transferred the cargo to Nome, then was chartered by a motion picture crew looking for shots of the far north.

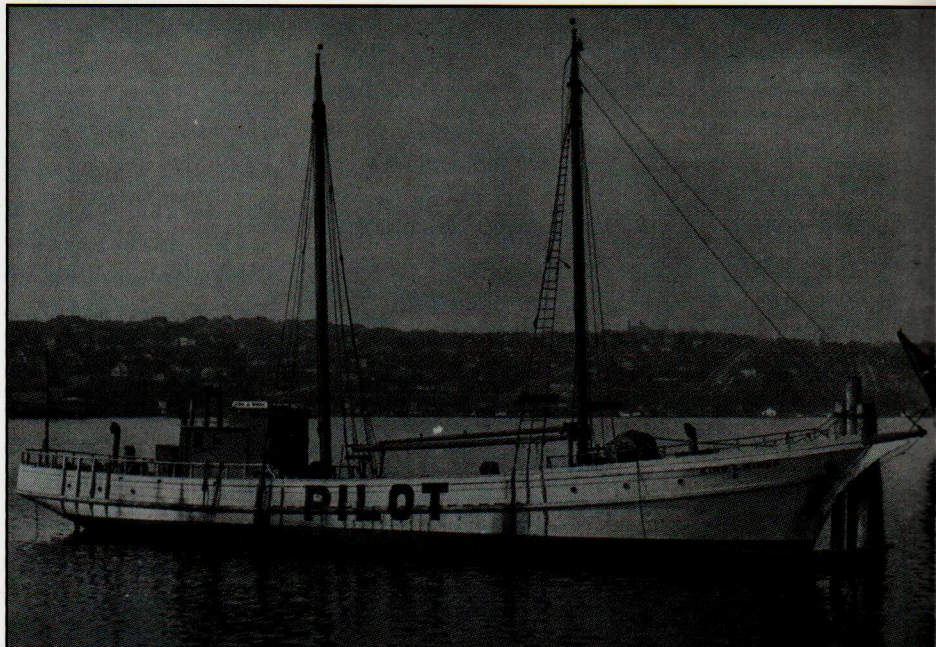
On Sept. 14, 1914, en route Siberia to cash in on the fur trade, she encountered the cutter Bear, which had failed in an attempt to rescue the ill-fated Vilhjalmur Stefansson expedition, whose

vessel, the Karluk, had been crushed.

With the film crew on still board, the King & Winge forged through 80 miles of ice to complete the rescue, returning the 14 survivors to Nome.

“They consider it one of the most important voyages of the King & Winge, “although it also had quite a bit of drama as a pilot boat.”

Indeed, after a distinguished career as a pilot boat at Washington’s Cape Flattery, she was



The King & Winge spent more than 30 years as a Columbia River pilot boat. She is pictured here before she was renamed Columbia.

in West Seattle, the King & Winge will be preserved. Winge has donated Winge memorabilia to our Society. He has also donated a 3-foot scale model of the vessel to exhibit it at Salty’s on Alaskan Way.

For Winge, the model represents his family’s heritage. “My father (Carl) bought all the material and his uncle designed it,” he says. “I did the part, both of them, of that ship.”

Winge and his wife, Beverly, lived on the ship, but his son Carl A. Winge lives on the family’s old estate (much of which is now Wingehaven). Last year the Winge was moved to the Log House Museum, joining the other ships in the Circle.

The King & Winge never made it to the Log House Museum, but she has never forgotten its West Seattle home.

“We were trying to get the owner to sell it so that we could restore it and put it on exhibit at Pier 1. But he said, you know, ‘One more season.’”

“Well, that was the last season.”

Driftwood Homesick

(Ada Hallberg, a member of our Society who lives near Beach Drive Southwest, has written many historical articles for Footprints.)

BY ADA HALLBERG

I liked it best when I could walk on the logs all the way from the Point to the swimming beach. Driftwood in abundance came in many shapes, different sizes. Upturned tree roots anchored themselves to the sand as tides pushed, pulled and partially buried them, slowly, gradually.

High tide. Dinner would be on the table at our house. People from the city had left the beach for their homes; the north wind began to blow. It was getting chilly. A few of us kids hung around grasping the tallest root spoke of the log, and the seaweed was thrown around us and on us, winds blew stronger and the waves got rougher.

During the daytime these root logs would sit high above the tide and the soft, dry sand surrounded them. Climb on that old root stump and pretend, "I am the King, the King!" (I never thought of shouting, "I am the Queen!")

And sometimes you could be riding that log all by yourself. Once I thought I would not make it home safely. The tide surprised me and was splashing high around me. Fast the water became deeper. It was clear as crystal. I could see easily to the scalloped sand and scattered rocks on the bottom. I was entranced. Suddenly I looked up and out in the bay I could see the Chippawa ferry heading toward Bremerton and in its wake super big waves boiling toward the shore.

Near the big rocks around 55th a bunch of boys wrestled logs. They paddled toward me. There's time for me to climb off. They are out to get me . . . those rough boys. There's the chance I can hang on. I think the Chippawa waves will reach them first and maybe the waves will knock them around. I want the fun of the waves. Do I dare wait? No need to decide, waves are rocking me and the root stump together. I am laughing and getting soaking wet. I am laughing and rocking wilder and wilder on the upturned, beach-weathered tree root. I have forgotten about the boys. I didn't worry about the boys. I hung on and I didn't look their way.

The thrill of those days came back to me for many years when still I was young, driftwood homesick for the Sound as I strolled the Palouse Hills at Washington State College. Years after my college days I remembered that excitement. And today? Over half a century later, if there were any more of those big logs, I bet I could ride them with the best.

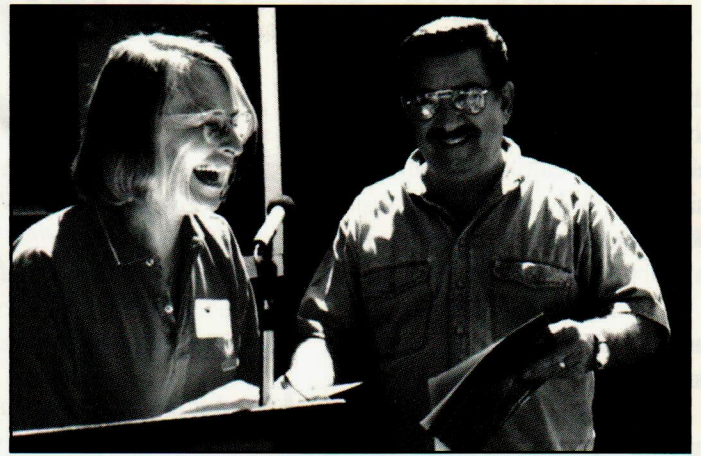
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Annual picnic at the Log House has family flavor



Photos by Deborah Mendenhall
Samantha Hecker tries her hand at a craft project at the annual family picnic, held June 30 at the Log House. The program also included a demonstration of the education kits that our Society created for area schools.



Our Society was the lucky winner in the West Seattle Olympic Heights Oldtimers club NCAA Final Four pool. Since no one in the pool picked Kentucky to win the title, the club decided to hand the money over to the Log House Museum. Here, Arlene Wade accepts a check from "Oldtimer" Fred Fazio.



Elliott Couden (left) went out on a limb and guaranteed good weather for the picnic. Here he basks in the sunshine with Evelyn and George Benson.

In Memoriam

We honor the memory of three SWSHS members who made valuable contributions to our community.

- **Frank J. Stasny**, member #338, who died March 19. An engineer at Boeing for 40 years, Frank started work in 1941 in the landmark "Old Red Barn." His accomplishments include starting the first chapter of the American Society of Tooling and Mechanical Engineers.
- **Philip L. Ceis**, member #116, who died June 28. A lifelong Alki resident with a passion for gardening, Phil was a well-known building and remodeling contractor and past president of the Alki Community Council. He is survived by his wife, Margaret.
- **Ferdinand Schmitz Jr.**, member #72, who died July 21 at the age of 92. The son of Alki-area pioneers Ferdinand Schmitz Sr. and Emma Schmitz, "Ferdie" was the first non-Native American born at South Alki. He was a graduate of West Seattle High School and the University of Washington, where he earned a degree in forestry. An outstanding industrialist, his career included positions as executive vice president and general manager of PACCAR, and vice president of Seattle Steel. He also served as a volunteer officer for Handcrest Inc., a division of Lighthouse for the Blind. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Margaret.

History on parade



A selection of historical photos from our archives? No, just a few shots from the July 27 Hi-Yu Grand Parade, where our Historical Society was well represented.

Top left: Erma Schwartz poses with Carol Vincent, who paraded in a turn-of-the-century bathing suit and parasol.

Top right: Melissa Hagen models a tea dress, circa 1900.

Center: In a scene straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting, kids find that an old-time fire engine is a good place to hang out after a parade.

Bottom: Banner holders Maritherese and Nathan Thomas lead a Historical Society contingent that included Bob Pontius' classic Ford pickup truck and other vintage vehicles.



photos by Deborah Mendenhall



SWSHS Oral History Project

Do you know someone who has a story to tell?

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parentheses)*

Oral histories will be an important part of the Birthplace of Seattle Museum. They'll be the basis of an exhibition, and they'll be an important part of the proposed computer system that will make our old house a state-of-the-art place of learning.

What is oral history?

The Oral History Association calls it "a method of gathering and preserving historical information in spoken form."

We have applied for a grant to begin collecting oral histories in a systematic — shall we say methodical? — way. To be acceptable for funding, an oral history interview must be thorough, documented, available to the public in usable form and accompanied by a legal release giving us permission to use the information gathered, including the tapes.

We are requesting funding to hire a historian to select narrators (the people to interview), do the necessary background research, conduct the interviews, index the transcripts, secure releases for use of the tapes and transcripts, and place them in the public domain.

The first step is to collect information about all the people SWSHS members believe would make good narrators. We

From the president:

(continued from page 3)

the garage, and creation of the exhibit. Requests have been submitted to governmental and private foundations. We will meet local community-match requirements for these awards from our Heritage Brick Campaign and Log House Circle membership.

would love to interview them all, but until we have lots of grants and lots of historians to prepare for, conduct and make public the interview, we'll have to set some priorities.

We're asking your help. Please think of all the people who would have interesting, accurate memories of Southwest Seattle in bygone days. A nomination form is included in this issue of *Footprints*. Please gather as much of the information as you can and return the completed form to the SWSHS.

Give the dates, as closely as you can (within a decade, perhaps) for when the person was involved in community, business, political, school, church and social activities.

Please give special consideration of how the person would fit into the scope of our project, which is to find out about business, politics, public services, transportation, schools, neighborhoods, industry, recreation, entertainment and the religious life of our elders.

We're asking for nationality or cultural affiliation to try to get a broad spectrum of Native Americans and people of Scandinavian, English, German, Asian, African — or other — extraction.

For more information, call the Log House Museum, 938-5293.

Your gift and brick orders can help us meet our match if received by Dec. 31.

I look forward to seeing you at our Saturday, Nov. 16 Annual Meeting for a more complete progress report with exciting new developments.

FOOTPRINTS

(Editor: Brad Chrisman)

Newsletter of the Southwest Seattle Historical Society
c/o South Seattle Community College
6000 16th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98106

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