



WHITMAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 51, No. 2 – March/April 2024

Next WCHS Major Event: Vintage Quilt Show at the Depot



**April 20, April 27, and May 4,
12:00 PM to 5:00 PM
in the Freight Room and the
Passenger Car**

The Pullman Depot's Vintage Quilt Show will once again exhibit quilted treasures of the past, on loan from area residents. Visitors to the Freight Room and Passenger Car on the above days can look forward to seeing handmade quilts and comforters that are normally

unavailable for public viewing. Information on each quilt pattern and its creator(s) will also be displayed. A number of other handwork items—such as crocheted doilies, handmade lace, and embroidered pillowcases—will also be on view. The cost is \$5 per person for the general public and \$3 each for WCHS members.

Join us on Saturday morning, March 20, at 10:00 AM, in the Ladies' Waiting Room at the Depot to hear Pullman mayor **Francis Benjamin** speak about his mother's quilts, some of which will be on display in the Freight Room. **Garnet Benjamin** made over 200 quilts during her lifetime, several of which are part of this year's quilt show. The program is free of charge. On Saturday, May 4, the Appaloosa Lace Guild from Moscow will be demonstrating bobbin lace making.

If you have a vintage quilt or handwork item that you would like to loan to the Depot for the quilt show, contact Freight Room director **Jamie Whitman** at jwhitman97@yahoo.com or 509-332-1005. Quilts and handwork should be at least 40 years old. Lenders will be admitted to the Quilt Show at no cost.



Moscow Youth Group Enjoys Fieldtrip at the Print Museum

by Janet Barstow

Youth group members from Moscow's Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints recently spent a morning at the Roy Chatters Newspaper and Printing Museum learning about the history of printing and the artistry of letterpress printing. Pictured are some of the students working on the first project they completed: setting their names with hand-set type, then printing and making a bookmark. They also all got to print a souvenir flyer on an 1877 Chandler and Price platen press, operated by foot power.

The museum, which is located on Main Street in Palouse, is open Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Group tours are welcome with prior

appointment by calling museum director **Janet Barstow** at 509-330-0353.

Rock Lake Legend to be Explored, by Greg May

It is not very often that curious folk are afforded an opportunity to definitively solve a generational mystery, such as the local belief that a train derailed into Rock Lake back in the 1920s. Many believe that at least one train car—and perhaps more—was carrying a load of Model T's, which are today still lying at the bottom of the lake.

Jake Powlisons, a professional salvage/recovery diver, and his team have agreed to search the portion of Rock Lake that has been surveyed as the only point of entry in the lake that could hide an object the size of a train car. He and his team have the type of equipment that scans underwater terrain in deep waters regardless of turbidity.



Rock Lake is famous for its steep, rocky shoreline and its lack of access for swimmers and boaters.

The search area is relatively small and any remnants of a train car will certainly be located if such a thing exists (the sonar is extremely precise).

Anyone who helps fund the expedition (estimated at \$6 to \$12K) is welcome to tag along during the search. Once funding is acquired, the expedition will be scheduled.

If interested, contact Greg May at (509) 919-0331.

Two Palouse People Programs Coming Up:

March 21: Kathy Meyer, “Women Homesteaders on the Palouse”

7:00 PM, Freight Room, Pullman Depot Heritage Center

Did you know that nearly twenty percent of homesteaders in the Mid-west and West were single women, divorcees, and widows? The Homestead Act, signed by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862, granted 160 acres of unappropriated public land to anyone of any race who was the head of a household—mostly men. Each prospective homesteader had to pay a small filing fee, agree to farm and live on the land for five years, and “improve” the land by building a home. Single men and women over 21 were also eligible, but married women were not.

In celebration of Women’s History Month, Kathy Meyer will discuss some of the women who homesteaded on the Palouse on their own, whose hard work and endurance—and indeed their very names—historians have only just begun to study.



Unknown woman chopping wood, with the Moscow Mountains in the background.

April 20 : Francis Benjamin, “A Quilter’s Legacy”

10:00 AM, Women’s Waiting Room, Pullman Depot Heritage Center



Francis Benjamin will share his mother’s quilting legacy and the impact she continues to have on people’s lives. **Garnet Benjamin** didn’t start quilting until she was 50; and in the following 35 years she completed over 220 quilts, over 380 quilted wall hangings and minis, and passed her passion on to others.



The Vintage Quilt Show in the Freight Room and Passenger Car will open immediately following Francis’ talk.



Jamie Whitman's name was drawn from our jar of volunteers' names for this issue of the newsletter. Jamie is the director of the Freight Room at the Pullman Depot, as well as the liaison between the Depot and the Pullman Chamber of Commerce and the Pullman Civic Trust.



She excels at creating interesting exhibits at the Depot—she designs a new one every few months so that there will always be something new for visitors to see when they come by. She also oversees Depot interns from Washington State University and provides home-baked refreshments for Depot Programs (BookTalk and Palouse People). Jamie was named WCHS Volunteer of the Year in 2021, which was well-deserved recognition for all the work she does at the Depot.

Jamie grew up in Pullman and graduated from PHS. She worked at the high school cafeteria until her retirement in 2016 and was a Boy Scout volunteer when her two sons were young. Her husband Bill is retired from the Pullman Fire Department. The couple has seven grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Members of her family often volunteer at the Depot because of Jamie's interest and enthusiasm.

When asked why she volunteers so much of her time to the Depot, she said, "It's fun! And I like contributing to my community."

One of the Women Working at the Depot Identified!

Alex Otero, director of the WCHS Archive in Pullman, was able to identify one of the women working at the lunch counter in the Pullman Depot, shown in a photo that was featured in the last newsletter. The woman on the left is Blanche Rambo, a native of Moscow, who was manager of lunch counter when the photo was taken in 1912. She later managed depot lunch counters in the Tri-Cities and in Montana. Thank you, Alex.



Please Renew Your Membership

If you haven't done so already, please take a minute or two to respond to the membership renewal request you may have recently received in the mail (batches are sent to different members every month). Membership would make a wonderful gift for a friend or relative who loves local history! The form can be found below, or you can download it from the WCHS website (whitmancountyhistorical.society.org). Thank you!

If you have information for the next newsletter... please call either **Debbie Sherman** (509) 334-7389 or **Kathy Meyer** (509) 432-1336, or email jdjsherman@msn.com or klemeyer@gmail.com. We can't print your stories unless you contact us! Please send events for our calendar, too!

2024 Calendar

March 20	WCHS Board Meeting, Perkins House, Colfax, 7:00 PM
March 21	Palouse People: "Woman Homesteaders on the Palouse," by Kathy Meyer, Pullman Depot Freight Room, 7:00 PM
April 17	WCHS Board Meeting, Print Museum, Palouse, 7:00 PM
April 20	Palouse People: "A Quilter's Legacy," by Francis Benjamin, Women's Waiting Room, Pullman Depot, 10:00 AM
April 20, 26, and May 4	Vintage Quilt Show, Freight Room and Passenger Car at the Pullman Depot
May 15	WCHS Board Meeting, Depot Freight Room, Pullman, 7:00 PM
May (date TBA)	Palouse People: "Fallen Cougars," Pullman Depot Freight Room, 7:00 PM
May 31-June 1	Battle Days, Rosalia
June 19	WCHS Board Meeting, WCHS Archive, Pullman, 7:00 PM
June 21-23	LaCrosse Farmer's Festival
June 29	Summer Dayz Car Show, St. John
July 12-13	Old Mill Days, Oakesdale
July 18	WCHS Board Meeting, Perkins House, Colfax, 7:00 PM
August 16-17	Lentil Festival, Pullman
August 16-17	Depot Days, Pullman Depot
August 21	WCHS Board Meeting, Pullman Depot Freight Room 7:00 PM
September 5-8	Palouse Empire Fair, Jones Schoolhouse & Blacksmith Shop
September 13-14	Palouse Days
September 18	WCHS Board Meeting, Print Museum, Palouse, 7:00
October (date TBA)	WCHS Annual Meeting
November 20	WCHS Board Meeting, Pullman Depot Freight Room, 7:00 PM
December 7	Christmas Open House at the Perkins House, Colfax
December 7	Winterfest, St. John
December 7, 14, 21	Train Car Holiday Bazaar, Passenger Car, Pullman Depot
December 18	WCHS Board Meeting, ZOOM

MEMBERSHIP: Become a part of the exciting future of Whitman County, or share its history with a friend or relative! Join, renew your membership, or give a gift membership.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership - \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Membership - \$ 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership - \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron Membership - \$100 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership - \$60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership - \$500 or more |

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Recipient: _____

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I'd like to make an additional donation: ☐ \$25.00 ☐ \$50.00 ☐ \$100.00 ☐ other \$ _____

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- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greatest Need | <input type="checkbox"/> Roy Chatters Newspaper and Printing Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holy Trinity Chapel | <input type="checkbox"/> Pullman Depot Heritage Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Perkins House and Cabin | <input type="checkbox"/> WCHS Archive |

Note that WCHS is a 501c 3. Your gift is tax deductible. Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Send to: WCHS Membership Chairman PO Box 67 COLFAX WA 99111