



WHITMAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Barron Flour Mill in Oakesdale Purchased

The upcoming sale of the Barron Flour Mill has been confirmed by the Innovia Foundation which, along with a group of generous donors who live in or have connections to the Oakesdale community, made it possible. Innovia raised \$120,000 toward the purchase. Private donations include a major gift from the retired CEO of Empire Bolt and Screw in Spokane, **Larry Stanley**, who is a native of Oakesdale.

The sale will take place on May 2. The original asking price was \$217,000 but it was reduced considerably in the final agreement. There is no mention of the machinery in that agreement, which former owner Mary Jane Butters (Moscow) removed from the building after she bought it in 1998.

Built in Illinois in 1862, the 13,400-square-foot mill was dismantled, shipped by rail to Oakesdale, and reassembled in 1890 by a man named “J. G. Porter.” It was subsequently purchased by Harvey A. Gray (1873-1968), a miller from Palouse, who sold it in 1907 for \$11,500 to Joseph Critchfield Barron, Sr. (1866-1955). It was operated by the Barron family until 1960 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Of the nineteen flour mills that once served Whitman County, it is the only one still standing.

Plans for restoration of the mill are being explored, and Innovia has met with the Whitman County Port commissioners to discuss the possibility of a partnership. Innovia foresees creating a space or spaces that will boost the economy of Oakesdale and the surrounding area—for example, a brewery, a business incubator, or an event space. Design West Architects of Pullman has determined that the mill is in good shape and has tentatively estimated that the project will cost around \$6 million. Innovia is not seeking long-term ownership.

If you would like to help support the project, contact the Oakesdale Historical Society on Facebook.

Break-in at the Depot

A discovery in early April revealed that the east door to the passenger car at the Pullman Depot Heritage Center had been kicked open by an individual or individuals, resulting in significant damage to the locks and the door casing. Nothing inside appears to have been taken or vandalized, not even the donation box. Police were notified, and temporary repairs have been made.

Next Palouse People: “Fallen Cougars”

Thursday, May 23, 7:00 PM

Pullman Depot Heritage Center, 330 N. Grand Ave.
in the Freight Room
by **Kathleen Ryan**



Colonel Ross Greening

In celebration of Memorial Day, we are very much looking forward to WSU History graduate students—**Jordan Bergstrom, Kyley Canion-Brewer, Cassie Crisman, and Samantha Edgerton**—giving another Fallen Cougars presentation. Under the direction of **Dr. Ray Sun**, the ongoing Fallen Cougars project assembles information and photographs as a way of honoring the war dead of Washington State College (now University), beginning with those who fought and died in World War II. Each year, several students choose a specific Cougar veteran whose story has touched them and share their journey of discovery with us.

The project aims to restore to public memory the identities of approximately 250 WSC students and faculty, transforming them from names on a plaque to young men to whom contemporary WSU students and the public can relate. The project’s goal is to serve as a scholarly resource, as well as “a means to advance public understanding and appreciation for the service and legacy of these Cougars in this defining period of American and world history.”

Perkins’ House Ice Cream Social Cancelled

Sadly, the Ice Cream Social at the Perkins’ House—usually held in mid- or late June—has been cancelled, according to WCHS director Val Gregory. Citing problems acquiring volunteer help, she urged anyone who is interested in volunteering at the Perkins’ House to contact her at 509-553-9729 or wchsdirector1@gmail.com.



Three New Exhibits at the Depot

Beginning May 11, visitors to the Depot will want to check out a new exhibit by **Jamie Whitman** featuring tools and small farm implements used by pioneers in the Palouse (on loan from the Whitman family), as well as two new exhibits by **Kathy Meyer**, one on Homestead Houses and a second on Oregon Trail Quilts. (At left is a quilt pattern called “Wagon Wheels.”)

Update on Work at the Pullman Depot Heritage Center

by Kathleen Ryan



The soffit replacement project is almost complete. The plywood has been replaced with a wood material that resembles the original tongue-and-groove. The paint applied is the original color, Roycroft Bottle Green used on Northern Pacific Railway depots. The soffit replacement also allowed adding electrical for lighting and security. The window and door restoration project is about halfway completed. Windows are being removed to be cleaned and repaired, and then re-installed so that they operate (all the windows have been caulked shut since the 1980s). The interior window frames will remain natural oak finish, and the exteriors painted Bottle Green. The projects are funded through a state Heritage Capital Projects grant and matching donations from our community. Design West is the architect on the project.

Vintage Quilt and Handcraft Show

The Vintage Quilt Show was at the Depot in Pullman on May 4, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The Appaloosa Lace Makers Guild demonstrated bobbin lace making. One of this year's highlights was a collection of vintage hand-made christening gowns, on loan from the Perkins' House.

Two adorable "bee baskets" (at right) were on sale.





Kathleen Ryan is currently secretary of the Steering Committee at the Pullman Depot Heritage Center, serves on its Events and Education Committee, Fund-Raising Committee, and Restoration Committee, among others. She was also a member of the team that prepared the Depot’s successful application for the National Historic Register.



Kathleen has a master’s degree from the Interdisciplinary Design Institute at WSU. Her professional experience includes over 30 years as an interior designer and energy consultant. Her work includes design of interiors that support informal learning through interpretive and hands-on exhibits in anthropology, physics, botany, geology, and cultural history. She co-founded the Rural Communities Design Initiative to help revitalize rural communities via their historic structures. She now owns a consulting business called Design North in Pullman. Kathleen also volunteers for the Pullman Food Co-op project.

She and her husband, WSU geochemist Jeff Vervoort, have two adult children. Their daughter Kaitlin lives in New York City, and their son Tyson, his wife Anna, and their two children Eleanor and Henrick live in St. Paul, MN. Kathleen and Jeff have lived in Pullman since 2002.

When asked why she spends so much of her time volunteering at the Depot, Kathleen said, “The Depot is a grand building with an influential history on the development of the region. I enjoy being part of revitalizing the building, recognizing its impact, and adapting it to a new use as a community heritage space.”

2024 Calendar

May 4	Final day of the Vintage Quilt Show at the Depot
May 15	WCHS Board Meeting, PDHC Freight Room, 7:00 PM
May 23	Palouse People: “Fallen Cougars,” Pullman Depot, 7:00 PM
June 19	WCHS Board Meeting, WCHS Archive, Pullman, 7:00 PM
June 21-23	LaCrosse Farmers’ Festival
June 29	Summer Dayz Car Show, St. John
July 12-13	Old Mill Days, Oaksdale
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, PDCH Freight Room 7:00 PM
September ?	Palouse Days
September 5-8	Palouse Empire Fair, Jones Schoolhouse & Blacksmith Shop
September 14	Palouse Days Show and Shine Car Show
September 18	WCHS Board Meeting, Print Museum, Palouse, 7:00
October (date TBA)	Annual Meeting
November 20	WCHS Board Meeting, PDHC Freight Room, 7:00 PM
December 7	Christmas Open House at the Perkins House, Colfax
December 7, 14, 21	Train Car Holiday Bazaar, Pullman Depot
December 18	WCHS Board Meeting, ZOOM

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). Or, fill out the form below and send it in! Membership would also make a great gift for Mother's Day or Father's Day—in fact, a family membership might be perfect for Mom and Dad! The form can be found below, or you can download it from the WCHS website (whitmancountyhistorical.society.org). Thank you!

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 |

Name of continuing or new member, or gift

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

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