

The Lopez Island Historical Society & Museum

P.O. Box 163 • Lopez Island, WA 98261 • lopezmuseum@rockisland.com • www.rockisland.com/~lopezmuseum

Newsletter

Summer 2005

The Salish Sea, as Native people called the waters between Puget Sound and the Discovery Islands, has been an economic, cultural, and military highway for millennia. Its unique maritime geography and resources have lured fishers, traders, raiders, settlers and smugglers.

MARITIME Lopez

by his Spanish name, “Juan de Fuca,” was the first European to enter local waters in 1592.

Conflicts in Europe and the struggle to control the spice trade kept Europeans away

for nearly two centuries. Then the fur trade drew them in force. In 1787 Charles Barclay, a British skipper sailing for the Austrian East India Company, entered our Straits. A year later, John Meares sailed into the Straits and named them after de Fuca. In 1790, Manuel Quimper and pilot Gonzalo Lopez de Haro (after whom Lopez is named), explored local waters.

By the early 19th century, Native peoples had been largely displaced, and greatly reduced in number by introduced diseases. Despite a British military presence, land hunger brought American settlers in increasing numbers. The plow proved mightier than the sword, and despite the Royal Navy, the San Juans and much of the Salish Sea were recognized as American territory in 1872.

Our new Maritime Lopez exhibit features displays on transportation & navigation, fishing & canneries, smuggling and shipwrecks. We have many newly discovered photos, and stories you may not have heard before. Please visit soon.

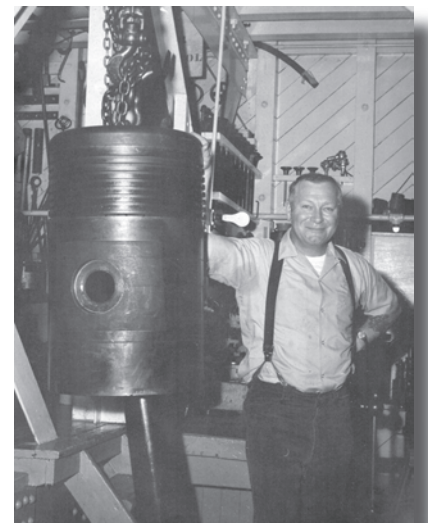


Richardson Cannery Workers—Mabel Marchant, Vesta Nichols, Eva Thornton, Gladys Burt, Abbie Hammond, Ethel Bruns, Victoria Porter, Gertrude Towell

The first people came to hunt marine mammals 7,000 to 9,000 years ago. By 3,000 years ago, an extensive family and social network, supported by exceptional boat handling skills and large, seagoing canoes, linked tribes and villages throughout the region. This was in turn connected to a continental

trade network that extended as far as Alaska, Central America, and the Great Lakes.

The first Europeans appeared just over 400 years ago, drawn by the fabled Straits of Anian which were reputed to connect the Pacific to the Atlantic. Apostolos Valerianos, a Greek pilot in the service of Spain whom we remember



B.C. Kilpatrick in the Vashon engine room

Maritime Lopez is funded by our sponsors: Lopez Island Pharmacy, Hayward Design & Construction, Sunset Builders Supply, Doug James Flooring, Ledger Investments, Islanders Bank, Island House Realtors, Islanders Insurance, Islands Marine Center, Tanbark Marine, Spencers Landing Marina, Lopez Village Properties, and a grant from Humanities Washington.

Message from the Board

As the new President of the LIHS Board it is a pleasure to write to you.

After a period of introspection, the Society and its Museum have been well and truly launched on a new phase. With new organization structure, mission and vision, a new Executive Director, and a beautifully restored, award winning Port Stanley School, the “New Museum” opened. The exhibit space at the Museum has been redesigned so that there will be one constantly evolving “Lopez Timeline,” and each year a new display will feature one important aspect of our history. The discovery of Amelia Davis’s daily diaries, detailing 50 years in the life of the first white woman settler on Lopez, prompted our first new exhibit in 2004. This year’s exhibit theme is *Maritime Lopez*, with artifacts, photos, and text that celebrate the importance of our maritime history.

Now what? We have big plans for the future, and we are confident we can pull them off because you, the members and the people of Lopez, have responded by supporting the Museum generously. Thanks to one very generous gift we have funds to support two interns this summer, Julia McCallum who just graduated with a degree in Anthropology from Barnard University, and Amy Frost, a Museum Studies graduate student at the University of Washington. Julia and Amy are already working on our 2006 exhibit, *After Hutch—Life on Lopez 1850-1900*, and our 2007 exhibit, *First Islanders*—an in-depth look at the Indians who lived on Lopez prior to 1850.

Amy and Julia, along with our cataloging expert, Ginger Lowell and a team of volunteers, also have a good start on the process of stabilizing and cataloging the huge collections donated to the Museum over the years. We are seeking grants to further improve our ability “to collect, preserve, share and interpret local history among island residents and visitors to increase awareness and appreciation of this resource for the educational benefit of this and future generations.” There’s more, but that’s enough for now.

Good things are happening at the Museum. Please, come visit and enjoy your Museum, open 12-4pm Wednesday through Sunday through September. I hope to meet you there.

—Mike Ellis



Interns Julia McCallum & Amy Frost conduct a photo identification session with Melba Gaddis, Frances Kring, Aletha McCauley, Ona Jean Goodrow, Bob Burt and Mary Harris.



The Lopez Island
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& Museum

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Interns:	Julia McCallum
	Amy Frost

(360) 468-2049 • lopezmuseum@rockisland.com

Things We Need

Good quality hand tools
Standard & legal size file cabinets
300G external hard drive
Chairs for Port Stanley School
Magnifying glasses

Collection Management

by Ginger Lowell

Cataloging— isn't that the boring, behind-the-scenes work done by quiet, shy ladies who wear their hair in buns? Not any more—cataloging is the very heart of any collection; it is what creates the pathways searchers use to find information, and provides links to other related items that might prove of interest. We have begun cataloging the Historical Society's collection of twenty to thirty thousand artifacts, documents and photographs.

Today, cataloging means creating a digital record that includes many pathways that will allow a searcher to find an item. For example, a visitor looking for pictures of his forebears would enter a family name in the computer, and up will pop that name with a list of all the photographs, documents and artifacts associated with it. Or a searcher might want to reconstruct the history of the different schools on the island: by searching under the name of the school, or just under the term 'schools', all of the Museum's holdings about schools or that particular school will pop up. Cataloging, done consistently and with an eye for fine detail (and excellent spelling), determines how easy or difficult—or impossible—it is to find things.

The Historical Society began cataloging photographs in spring this year with a small cadre of trained volunteers. We are carefully linking to the accessioning and indexing work done by Gertrude Boede prior to 1986. Gertrude devised an ingenious code that organized photographs and slides by subject; then she carefully recorded what she knew and what donors told her about the photo, on index cards. These are invaluable historical records (besides being really interesting reading).

Interesting historical highlights can make for slow cataloging, though; it is estimated it will take between five and ten years just to catalog the items already in the Museum—and donations continue to stream in.

When you donate a treasure to the Museum, our Collection Management work group will evaluate the item for preservation/conservation needs, create a catalog record, and store the item in conservation-appropriate boxes, sleeves, or files. This process is time-consuming and costly, but it is the only way to preserve, and have access to all the items that are important to Lopez history. Generous gifts from LIHS members, and the Lopez Thrift Shop have enabled the Museum to purchase acid-free storage materials, shelving, and provide salary support for a staff person who will be responsible for the collection management tasks described above.

The Museum has applied to the Institute for Museum and Library Service, a federal agency, for a matching grant to provide three years' of financial support for collection development. Meanwhile, we will keep doing what we can with money from our general fund and our group of dedicated volunteers.

Soon you will be able to find artifacts and information by searching the computer, the same as you do in the library. We aren't stopping there, though; we are planning a future in which our digital records are mounted on the Internet, accessible to everyone who has an interest in Lopez Island, wherever they may be.

Please call us if you can identify either of the photos on this page. They are among the many unlabeled photos in our collection.



LIHS Summer Update

by Mark Thompson-Klein, Museum Director

There is so much happening at the museum this summer, it's hard to know where to start.

First, I want to thank all the volunteers who have worked with us this year. We had a very successful fund raising auction, put together a beautiful exhibit, developed a dedicated team of Docents, and have a great start on our collection management project. This is all due to the dedication and generosity of our volunteers and the Lopez community.

We are two years into our three-year program to reconfigure the museum into a warm and welcoming exhibit space. We have worked hard to develop high quality exhibits, and are encouraged by visitors' reactions to *Maritime Lopez*. The greatest compliment is observing visitors enjoy a relaxing hour (or more) catching up on Lopez Island's colorful stories. We hope you will visit soon.

We plan to produce a new exhibit every summer—we really want you and your guests to stop in every year to see what's new. Look for *After Hutch—Life on Lopez 1850-1900* in 2006; *First Islanders* in 2007; *Lopez Communities, Organizations & Businesses* in 2008, and *Lopez Island's Natural History* in 2009.

We have also, thanks to Ginger Lowell's skills and leadership, started stabilizing and cataloging our

collections of photos, archives and artifacts. This is a huge project that will take several years to complete. Our goal is to know what we have, where to find each item, and what the significance of each item is to Lopez history. We are still getting together with groups of long-time islanders to identify the many hundreds of unlabeled photos we have found.

With construction of a 30+ space parking area, an insulated storage building, gravel path, and a few other small, but important, tasks we have finally opened the Port Stanley School for public use. We have hosted a few events already—the Lopez Art Guild had a very successful show this spring, and we have a couple of weddings already booked for next year. Please call the museum for rental information.

And finally, I want to welcome our two interns, Julia McCallum and Amy Frost. They each bring new skills and great energy to LIHS, and we are lucky to have them with us this summer. We are also lucky to have been selected by Spring Street School student, Alice Haefele, as beneficiary of her community service efforts. Our intern program is funded this year (and in 2006 & 2007) by a generous donation from Charles & Nancy Givens.

We still have plenty of fun and rewarding volunteer opportunities. Please call the museum for information.

Join the Lopez Island Historical Society

to help collect, preserve, interpret, and share local history.

To become a member (or renew your membership) complete this form and return it with your check. Memberships and donations are fully tax deductible. Thank you for your support.

- Individual \$15 - \$99 Family \$25 - \$99 Business \$50 +
 Sponsor \$100 + Benefactor \$1,000 +

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The Lopez Island Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization Your gift is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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