

THE PRESERVATION POST



Clark County Historic Preservation Newsletter

Inaugural issue of *The Preservation Post*

By Jacqui Kamp

The Clark County Historic Preservation Commission would like to introduce the first issue of *The Preservation Post!* Our goal is to provide relevant and interesting information about historic topics here in Clark County and to hopefully introduce the Historic Preservation program and its resources to those unfamiliar with it.

The Clark County Historic Preservation program was officially created in 1981 by the Board of County Commissioners. The program created the heritage register and a local historic preservation commission. The commission initiates and maintains the register and reviews proposed design changes to registered properties. Since that time, 59 sites have been listed on the Clark County Heritage Register.

Because of our commitment to historic preservation, Clark County and the City of Vancouver have been recognized by the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation as Certified Local Governments, which provides additional financial and technical opportunities for historic preservation initiatives.

Tips on preserving historic buildings

By Steve Kaiser

There are many advantages to the fortunate owner of a historic property or structure. Certainly among these are the direct financial benefits of being listed on the County's Heritage Register, with the possibility of a property tax reduction or special valuation (discussed elsewhere in this newsletter). In addition, a properly preserved historic structure can create equity through its unique handmade details, the richness of history embodied by the stories associated with it, and its ability to connect past with present.

But how can one square the obvious social benefits of

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The Historic Preservation Commission is made up of 5 volunteers recommended by the Vancouver City Council and appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. The current commission consists of two architects, one archaeologist, a history professor and a former director of the Clark County Historical Museum. They are a wealth of information for those interested in listing and/or preserving their historic property.

Historic properties are the cornerstone of the county's heritage and culture. Although Clark County is rich in properties of the past, its future is up to us. Historic Preservation programs rely on citizen involvement to protect and restore historic sites in our community. We hope this newsletter provides an opportunity for you to get involved and learn more about historic Clark County!

historic preservation with the need to have a property that is functional and comfortable in its present use? The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation offer a set of guidelines that address this question, and are the rules by which Clark County makes determinations on listing on its Heritage Register.

The intent of the Standards is to assist in the long-term preservation of a property's significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. However, as implied in the rule's title, "rehabilitation" assumes that at least some repair or alteration of a historic building will be needed from time to time in order to provide for an

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Tax benefits for historic property owners

By Jacqui Kamp

Clark County believes good land stewardship should be rewarded, including the preservation of our cultural and historic assets. Preservation of significant historic structures is needed so that current and future generations can appreciate our County's rich past and invest in our promising future.

Through its *Current Use* tax reduction and *Special Valuation* programs, Clark County has rewarded citizens' commitments to a healthy community and sustainable development. These benefits reward property owners who dedicate their property to Historic Preservation by listing them on the Clark County Heritage Register.

The *Current Use* program rewards historic property owners by lowering the tax assessment for the underlying land of the structure. The *Special Valuation* program benefits property owners who make substantial improvements to historic buildings. "Special Valuation" is the revision of the assessed value of a historic property which subtracts, for up to ten years, such rehabilitation costs as are approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

For more information about these two tax incentive programs, please contact the Historic Preservation program manager at (360) 397-2280 or visit the web site at www.clark.wa.gov/historic.

New sites listed on the Heritage Register!

By Jacqui Kamp

In 2009, three new sites were added to the Clark County Heritage Register. These properties have been placed on the register because they are significantly associated with the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and/or cultural heritage of the community. Please let us introduce them to you.

The *Nelson Farmhouse* was built by Emanuel Nelson, an immigrant from Sweden, who moved to America and settled on 40 acres of land north of Vancouver in 1891. The farmhouse, which he designed and built in that same year, represents what remains today of the original farmstead. It also appears to be one of the last remaining farmhouses from the early settlements of the Salmon Creek area. The house is a good example of a vernacular Greek Revival farmhouse of the late 19th century.

Over the past 118 years, the farmstead has changed due to the development of the area and the alterations to the

property. Much of the original Nelson Farmstead's 40 acres was sold and developed in 1977 into the residential subdivision known as Woodcreek Edition. Although the land surrounding this historic structure has been developed into an urban neighborhood, the Nelson Farmhouse still stands with its original siding, windows and doors. The farmhouse and the Nelson's history provide an important reminder of the lives of

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*Nelson Farmhouse, Vancouver
Built circa 1891*



"It appears to be one of the last remaining farmhouses from the early settlements of the Salmon Creek area."

Preserving Clark County's history

By Andrew Gregg

Clark County's rich history has never been appropriately appreciated. Our citizens often take pleasure in pointing out to visitors the many aspects of historical interest, but the surface of our area's fascinating past is usually barely scratched.

Well-known examples of early adventures include the sea voyages of George Vancouver and Captain James Cook, the Hudson's Bay Company's presence at Fort Vancouver, and, of course the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Famous characters who spent time in Clark County included Esther Short, Ulysses S. Grant, George Marshall, Mother Joseph, and Willie Nelson.

But, Clark County's History runs much deeper than the cavalcade of names, dates, battles, and adventures. We are also able to appreciate elements of the environment that were built by people. Many intriguing structures



Columbian Building, Vancouver – Before and after renovations

have disappeared from the landscape over time, but others remain since their forms are still functioning. Property owners have also preserved historic buildings. These interested people have restored barns, homes, and commercial buildings to their original appearances. Occasionally, these structures serve their initial purpose, but increasingly, they have been utilized in new ways.

Clark County Historic Preservation Commission is

Please see *Preserving* on page 6

Historic grant funding at work in Clark County

By Jacqui Kamp

As a Certified Local Government, Clark County is able to apply for competitive grant funding for historic preservation work. In the past two years, the county has been successful in receiving funding for historic preservation and educational projects.

In 2008, the county received a grant for the Clark County Historical Museum to develop a curriculum and prototype educational kit for use in grades 4–12 classrooms in Southwest Washington. The project relates to regional history between 1870 and 1920 and features non-culturally sensitive materials excavated during construction of the downtown Vancouver Convention/Hilton Hotel, which opened in 2005. The archaeological education kits are currently being tested in classrooms and have been receiving positive feedback. Congratulations to the museum staff, archaeologist and teachers for their work on this extremely successful and innovative project!

In the summer of 2009, the county applied for and received a grant for an archaeological and historic property inventory project at the Clark County Poor Farm and Cemetery on 78th Street in Hazel Dell. The Poor Farm and Cemetery is an historic resource located at the 78th Street Agricultural property, formerly occupied by Washington State University.

According to local legend, the property dates back to 1873 when a resident settled a \$400 judgment by deeding the county 100 acres of land. This property became the Poor Farm and a structure was built to house the indigent. A small plot of land on the southwest corner of the property houses the cemetery where at least 200 people (mostly residents of the poor farm) are buried.

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Downtown Vancouver design competition with a twist

By Derek Chisholm

Each year, the Historic Preservation Commission hosts outreach and educational events intended to raise awareness of preservation issues in Clark County. In previous years, the Commission has hosted architecture lectures, tours, and organized an Old House Fair. In 2010, the Commission is holding a design competition with a historic preservation twist.

For this competition, the Historic Preservation Commission has been awarded grant funds, and has partnered with the American Institute of Architects and the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation. The competition will generate inspired ideas for new development in historic, downtown Vancouver.

This design competition asks participants to submit designs for new construction that will complement and incorporate aspects of adjacent historic buildings. The Competition is open to everyone. Submissions will present



designs for new development on the site of the parking lot adjacent to the Elks Building at Evergreen Boulevard and Washington Street. Designs should utilize the rich ornamentation of the Elks Building, built in 1911, and its architectural elements – polychromatic brick patterns, marble-based sconces, iron balconies – and approaches.

For more information, please visit the Competition website: www.cityofvancouver.us/HistoricDesign or contact Derek Chisholm at 971-322-7942.

Contest turns a photographic eye on Clark County's historic places

By Colleen Kawahara

Photographers with an eye for the historic will be asked to submit entries for the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission's first annual photo contest.

The contest will be held in May to commemorate national Historic Preservation Month. Preservation Month raises awareness about the power historic preservation has to protect and enhance our communities and the places that really matter to us.

Each photographer may submit black and white photos of different historic buildings or sites listed on the Clark County Heritage Register (www.clark.wa.gov/historic).

Winning images will be printed in a 2011 calendar, sponsored by the Commission as well as featured on the city and county's websites.



More information about this contest will be coming soon.

If you have any questions about the contest, contact Jan Bader at jan.bader@ci.vancouver.wa.us.

The historic Green farm at the long lost settlement of Lewisville

By Steve Kaiser

The Albert and Letha Green Farm

Among the early settlements in Clark County that have all but disappeared is Lewisville, located along the banks of the East Fork of the Lewis River. The original Lewisville farmstead of Albert and Letha Green is the only remaining continuously occupied site with structures from that once thriving community. The original farmhouse and barn, and various outbuildings and site elements exist in their original locations. The site has been occupied by Albert and Letha's descendants for the past 125 years.

Albert Green was among his family's second generation of Irish immigrants from County Cork to be born "across the pond". Albert and his father Michael made their way west from their home near Tiverton, Ontario (Canada) about 1880. They stayed for a short time in Portland, and soon relocated to the tiny settlement of Charter Oak, near Battle Ground. Later Albert purchased land with an existing home at the site of Lewisville.

The House

The Albert Green House is located on the south bank of the river. The original house, dating from before 1884, was a simple, two-story wood framed farmhouse with gable roofs and a one-story kitchen wing, constructed on a flat terrace at a safe height above the river. In 1911, an extensive remodeling was undertaken to expand the living quarters. Significant features include a wide veranda encircling the west and south elevations, enhanced exterior surface details, and most striking, the addition of a spacious third floor open pavilion covered by a gable-on-hip roof.

Per the description from the National Register of Historic Places, "Waist-high walls form a solid railing around the perimeter of the large, rectangular space. Simple square posts at regular intervals support the impressive roof, and very broad, open, slightly flared eaves with exposed rafter ends provide shelter from sun and rain. The spaces between the supporting posts were originally screened, and the large single space was used as an outdoor sleeping loft in summer. This feature of the house is unique in Clark County and probably in Washington State."

The Barn

Around 1900, Albert undertook construction of a barn a few hundred yards to the south of the house. Per historic



The Green House – 2009

registration documents, "The barn is exemplary of large agricultural structures built in the area at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although it is unique in some of its details, the design of the barn responds to local and regional patterns and requirements for its intended use. Built primarily from materials produced on site or locally, the barn encompasses a large volume of space which supported dairy cattle, horse-for-hire and domestic stock-keeping activities, all under one roof. The barn has a distinctive, gabled roof form topped by matching ventilation cupolas, and with red and white painted shiplap and board-and-batten siding, it exemplifies barns of the period."

Although the last century has witnessed a gradual decrease in the size of the original Green homestead, Albert and Letha's grandchildren and great-grandchildren have retained upwards of 20 acres. This family acreage includes parcels that contain the farmhouse and the barn. These remarkable structures have been named to the National Historic Register as well as the Clark County Heritage Register. In addition, other historic elements of the site still exist including original stone walls and roadways built by the Greens, a chicken coop dating from the original farm, and a home designed by Green daughter Evelyn Watson for her family in about 1945.

Special note: Much of the above information is from an excellent family genealogy compiled by Albert and Letha Green's grand-daughter and grand-son, Jacqueline Andersen and Richard Wooldridge



Green Barn

Tips from page 1

efficient contemporary use. The rules provide for these types of upgrades, while ensuring that these repairs and alterations do not damage or destroy materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the building's historic character.

In addition to the Standards, a property owner has other resources available to assist in projects that may impact the historic elements of a structure. Historic Preservation program staff and the Historic Preservation Commission can be a great source of information and feedback. Working with an architect knowledgeable in the Standards and skilled

at renovation projects can also ensure a smooth process and a successful outcome.

For the complete list of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, please visit the National Park Service's Web site at:

www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rehabstandards.htm

Steve Kaiser, an architect and historic property owner, is a member of the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission.

Historic grant from page 3

For decades, the souls buried at the poor farm have lain forgotten in unmarked graves. In 2001, three local residents researched death certificates, funeral home records and newspaper obituaries to create what they believe to be a list of all the men, women and children buried at the farm. The grant from the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation will provide the funding to continue this research by completing an intensive level survey and evaluation of the Poor Farm historic site.

For more information about the two projects mentioned here, please contact Jacqui Kamp at (360) 397-2280 ext. 4913.



*Clark County Poor Farm Building
Built Circa 1926*

Preserving from page 3

sponsored jointly by Clark County and the City of Vancouver. Five appointed volunteers serve the community by promoting preservation of our area's historic buildings, monuments, and markers. Currently the Commission consists of two architects, an archaeologist, the former executive director of the Clark

County Historical Museum, and a professional historian. This group meets on the first Tuesday of every month at O.O. Howard House on Officers' Row.

Clark County structures at least fifty years of age and have historic significance are eligible for property tax relief if owners formally list their building on the Clark County Heritage Register. If you are a property owner who is interested in listing your historic building on the Register, please contact Jacqui Kamp at 360-397-2980, extension 4913.

Andrew Gregg, a Clark County native, is chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission.

"Famous characters who spent time in Clark County included Esther Short, Ulysses S. Grant, George Marshall, Mother Joseph, and Willie Nelson."

New Sites from page 2

the early settlers of Clark County, specifically those that settled in the Salmon Creek area.

The Lucky Lager Warehouse, located in downtown Vancouver is a significant illustration of simple downtown commercial and industrial architecture from the early 20th century. The simplicity of its stripped early modern design and poured concrete construction is a reflection of the desire of Vancouver’s World War I era business community to participate in the growth and prosperity of the new 20th century. This building site has local significance as a continuing place of business in the downtown core for over 100 years.



The Lucky Lager Warehouse, Vancouver
Built circa 1920



The Propstra House, Vancouver
Built circa 1923

The Propstra House, located in Vancouver’s Lincoln neighborhood, was built circa 1923 and purchased by Jacob and Anna Propstra in 1933. Typical of eclectic houses built between 1880–1940, the structure can best be described as a combination of styles. The primary style is Tudor Revival with some French Eclectic and Italianate influences.

The structure is associated with Clark County history with respect to it being the home of the Propstra family, specifically Jacob “Jack” and Anna Propstra and their son George. The Propstra family founded the business that evolved into today’s Burgerville chain.

For more information on the sites listed in this article, please visit the program’s web site at www.clark.wa.gov/historic.

Places to visit, things to do

Discover Clark County’s rich cultural heritage by visiting these sites of interest. For more information about hours of operation or tours, please see their web site.

Pomeroy Living History Farm 20902 NE Lucia Falls Road
Yacolt, WA

Experience 1920’s farm life at the Pomeroy Living History Farm. Period dressed interpreters help visitors participate in farm activities such as grinding grain, washing clothes, feeding livestock and making rope at this farmstead registered on the National Register for Historic Properties.
www.pomeroyfarm.org/

Clark County Historical Museum 1511 Main Street
Vancouver, WA

The history of Clark County is on display at this Vancouver museum, which is housed in a former Carnegie Library. Built in 1909, this building is on the Clark County Heritage

Register and National Register of Historic places. Visit an old country store, country kitchen, and doctor’s office. Exhibits feature a Native American gallery, railroad exhibit, American military memorabilia and other artifacts dating back to the 13th century. www.cchmuseum.org

North Clark Historical Museum 21416 399th Street Amboy,
WA

The North Clark Historical Museum shares the area’s historical legacy through educational exhibits on American Indian culture, pioneer heritage & logging. The museum is in the old Amboy United Brethren Church, a beautiful church dedicated in 1910, and listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and Clark County Heritage Register.
www.amboywa.com/museum.htm

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Cedar Grist Mill 43907 NE Grist Mill Road
Woodland, WA

The picturesque Cedar Creek Grist Mill is the only grain-grinding mill in Washington that has maintained its original structural integrity, grinds with stones, and is water-powered. Built in 1876, the mill has been fully restored as a working museum and is registered as a National Historic Site. www.cedarcreekgristmill.com/

Pearson Air Museum 1115 E 5th Street
Vancouver, WA

Aviation history is on display at Pearson Air Museum. Exhibition areas offer a stunning collection of vintage airplanes, interpretive displays, an interactive children's center, theater presentations and gift shop. Located at the oldest continually operating airfield in the U.S., the main exhibition area hosts special events and dances. www.pearsonairmuseum.org

Two Rivers Heritage Museum 116th Street
Washougal, WA

Located at the confluence of the Columbia River and Washougal River, this historical museum features the heritage of the Camas and Washougal area. Located across the street from the Pendleton Woolen Mills, a visit can be combined with a mill tour and shopping trip to the company store. www.historyfish.net/tworiversheritagemuseum/

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