

# The **Prairie Review**

Sequim Museum & Arts



Vol. 5 No. 1 Fall 2023

## Sequim's Stunning Skyscraper



*Clallam Grain Elevator  
Photo by Sherrie Cerutti*



## SEQUIM MUSEUM & ARTS

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### PRAIRIE REVIEW

DESIGN & PRODUCTION  
Susan Hedding & Paul Muncey

## State of the Sequim Museum

Thank you, thank you, thank you to the many people (you know who you are) who have helped so very much this past year. We've had visitors from 17 countries and set a record for attendance—over ten thousand!

I'm blessed to have my docents, volunteers, and close friends to support me. Special shout out to Dr. Peter Becker for organizing the Maker's Lab and to our dear friend, Roger Petroff, who maintains all our tractors; he is priceless. ❤️

— Judy



Old Sequim High School yearbooks for sale  
Call us—we may have your year.



*Tribal Leaders visit "Journey Through Time," an exhibit space built by the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe. The exhibit was designed and curated by Katherine Vollenweider with woodworking by Bob Stipe. Mask designed and sculpted by Dale Faulstich.*

*From left: Bob Stipe, Theresa Lehman, Liz Mueller, Loni Greninger, Rochelle Blankenship, Katherine Vollenweider*



Saturday, November 25, 2023



## Maker's Lab Up & Running

Model airplane building, model railroading, *Girls Who Code*, EAA Silent Flyers, Raspberry Pi, sewing classes and more now available, check the museum's website.

Dr. Peter Becker will be adding additional activities and classes in January, 2024 to attract home school students and others.



## Support Your Local Sequim FFA Truly Farm to Plate Organic Food

Recently Bill McFarlen and his farmers-to-be class worked hard to raise money to purchase a food wagon to sell the crops they raised. The funds support FFA activities, supplies, and green house materials. Check the FFA website or Facebook for times or events, including takeout food.



# WANTED

## MISSING BADGE



# REWARD

**NO QUESTIONS ASKED**  
call 360.681.2257 -- leave message



Merle Fisher and Babe Lehman c. 1930s





# Sequim Prairie Holidays



Pioneers look back on the holidays fondly as a simple time when everything centered around family, neighbors and church. No one had much money to spend, so to a degree, we were all the same! It was a time of sharing, visiting and eager anticipation for the children. Christmas Day had fewer presents under the tree than we see now, but it was wonderful, with lots of handmade gifts, new clothes and maybe one very special item that we requested from Santa.

Sequim's Christmas season began with Santa arriving on the fire truck in front of the Dresden Theater to hordes of anxious youngsters lined up and down the block. The jolly old gentleman held court on the stage, while everyone waited their turn to sit on his lap, make their request and leave with a handful of candy. Not all the little ones were anxious to see the fat guy in the red suit—some had to be pushed kicking and screaming to “the knee,” just long enough to get their picture taken. If you missed this encounter, you could catch up to Santa a week later during a visit to The Sequim Variety Store, (now A-1 Auto Parts). The popular emporium had a wonderful toy department, from which the children could glean ideas for their Santa letters.

Each year the large tree by the Methodist Church (now the Olympic Theater Arts) was decorated with large colored lights by the congregation. Since the city had not yet purchased Christmas decorations, it was a big hit with everyone who drove on Sequim Avenue. Barbara McCourt Stone and her sister, Janice Pennington, played angels in the live Nativity scene on the church lawn. One year, Barb took a tumble off the hay bale she was perched on when her attention was diverted by one of the live animals nearby. Those wings she was wearing were not operational.

Bob and Betty Duncan closed the Dungeness Tavern so Bob could don a Santa outfit, go next door to the Dungeness Schoolhouse and hand out treats to all the little ones, including his unsuspecting daughter, Bobbi Jean. Costumes were handmade by the mothers for the annual Christmas play and each child was specially chosen for their role in the

production. Marlin (Spike) Holden played the part of a cat. His brothers, Merle and Pete, enjoyed reminding him of that stellar performance for years to come. The Holdens joined the Lyle Prince family, and other relatives in Jamestown to open presents, eat together and just enjoy each other's company. Similar celebrations were going on all over the area, until milking and chores brought the evening to a halt. Cows apparently didn't take a holiday break.

The big Presbyterian Church on Washington St. had the annual Christmas pageant with the youngest kids in Sunday School playing the parts of Mary, Joseph and the three Wise Men. Someone's “Betsy Wetsy” doll took on the role of baby Jesus. They move fast at that age with short attention spans! When it was over, they ran to see Santa, who handed out little brown bags containing an orange, hard candy, and a walnut in the shell. The candy ribbons were usually stuck to the orange, but it didn't matter because this once-a-year treat was a big deal. During the 1950s and 60s, no one noticed that Santa had only four fingers on his left hand, due to a terrible industrial toy accident at the North Pole, except for one of his own eight children. This “little innocent” remarked something about his Daddy's hand being like Santa's, but fortunately no real connection was made.

Janis Jones Kendall dreamed of wearing the beautiful costume and portraying Mary in the Nativity Play at the Lutheran Church. Sadly, every year she was chosen to be the Wise Man in the middle, between two boys. The annoying mustache got in her nose and the beard stuck in her mouth. When she recited her line, it caused her to gag. After three years of torture, it was no wonder she celebrated outgrowing the robes of her designated Wise Man! Neil Clayton had other problems with his singing part in the Rebecca Lodge Christmas Program upstairs at the I.O.O.F. Hall on Seal Street. Stage fright marred his holiday for seven years until, at age 12, his voice changed and he was relieved to know his singing career was over!



The big snows in 1949 and 1955 brought great holiday sledding up at Slab Camp, Burnt Hill, Happy Valley, or for that matter, any long slope if the road was closed to traffic. The Bower, Herman, McNamara, and Lynch boys had a great ride down Lost Mountain Road (now Hooker Road) without loss of any limbs. Loren Luce (whose father, contractor Schueler Luce, built the first house at Sunland in 1963) tells of sledding on the hills near Atterberry Road and wonders how he survived those dangers. Farther down the hill the Reed, Roup, Reandeau and Sukert kids took some wild rides down to Bruekner's barn, then tied their sleds to the tail of Judy's old palomino, Blondie, and climbed on the mare's back to be hauled to the top of the pasture for another run on the slope. Snow didn't fall every winter in Sequim, so it was a big thrill when it came, especially at Christmas.

Many families went out on low tide nights to nearby Dungeness dock or other beaches to catch crab when school was out for Christmas vacation. Some pitchforks, a couple buckets, and a few lanterns and many kids brought home a harvest of the sweetest Dungeness winter crab you ever tasted. Fires were built on the beach to boil the salt water and cook the crab in big pots before the drive home. Tired and wet kids huddled together in the back seat and fell asleep before the car heater came on to warm them. Some beautiful memories remain of being out in the water on a snowy night, with your feet frozen to the inside of your leaky barn boots.

When we were in the Sequim Elementary School on Alder Street, each class had a Christmas party on the last day before holiday break. Everyone looked forward to it and was very excited about the gift exchange. Which could either bring sheer joy or utter disappointment. The party was a simple affair with the "room mother" arriving with treats, usually homemade cupcakes. They were quickly washed down with the overly sweet swill, Kool-Aid, that was mixed right there over the classroom sink.

Joe Turton was delivering eggnog to the homes of his regular Darigold customers in town. Lehman's Butcher shop brought the Christmas hams down from the smokehouse on Washington

Street. The smell was amazing. Housewives looked forward to serving this delicacy to their families on Christmas Day. Many citizens went in the back door of Lehman's to the cold storage lockers to pick up some venison left there during hunting season. It was needed for the holiday mincemeat pies. In the tiny post office, further west on Washington, people crowded in to buy stamps and exchange the latest gossip.

Meanwhile the kids on Riverside Road (now River Road) were thinking of dangerous things to do while on Christmas vacation. With very few free hours between milking cows and other farm chores, every moment was precious. Dick Cays and Bill and Kathy Gowdy would head over to Lona Jean Silberhorn's for cookies. Lona's mom, Flo, had a beauty shop in her home, so after visiting with the ladies under the dryer, the kids stopped by the kitchen to snack. Next stop was the Livingstons, then up the road to the Stipes and Easterlys, where Ron, Rich, Bob, Bill, Al, Jim and a horse named Molly could be found. If there was a lot of snow on the road, Lloyd Stipe tied a wooden ladder to the back bumper of his station wagon, and the brave ones jumped on for a wild ride down Riverside Road to Secor Road.

Many families, including those of the mill workers, depended on the kindness of the Carlsborg store owners to carry their food and gas expenses on paper, until the next payday. If times were bad they would accept partial payment. Interest was never charged! Benson's Store, R Corner, Rosand's, Long John's, and Agnew Grocery allowed credit to families if they needed food but didn't have cash. A handshake or a spoken promise would evoke enough trust to get milk, bread or gas for the trip to work. King's or the Town Tavern might run a tab for a good customer in a tough time on New Year's Eve.

Things have changed in Sequim the last 75 years, but I think there are still farm kids hanging a big, wool boot sock from the fireplace mantel. Chosen for their size and strength, these stockings could hold an amazing amount of stuff. Many of the old traditions remain and are now being shared with our new friends and neighbors.

Judy Reandeau Stipe



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

## THE BOYS IN THE BOAT

Support Sequim pride, head to a movie theater for a Christmas showing of *The Boys in the Boat*, the story of the UW rowing team upset win over the favored German team at the 1936 Olympics.

Local hero, Joe Rantz, and his fellow team members overcame incredible obstacles to put to shame Hitler's pride.



Above: Local Sequim resident and author "Mac" Macdonald's dad, Scotty, was an ardent cheerleader for the UW Rowing Team, the most popular sport in those days.



Santa finishing up a long night in a new shiny "sleigh."

**VFW**  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
**Happy Thanksgiving**  
Join us for free meal!

Nov. 23 at 1pm  
169 E. Washington St.

Celebrate Christmas like we used to by giving a meal to a stranger, buying a child you've never met a new toy, or handing someone who is cold a new, warm blanket.

It will make you feel better than any present you've ever received!

Santa

Merry Christmas





# More Grain Elevator

Big cities have towers and skyscrapers that define their landscapes. Sequim, with its deep roots as a farming community, has its historic grain elevator.

The base of the structure was built in 1929 as a storage warehouse; the grain elevator was completed in 1945. It operated as the old Clallam Co-Op until 1977.

The Clallam grain elevator, a Sequim landmark sitting right downtown in Sequim surrounded by businesses, is the tallest structure in town.

But in the early years there wasn't much around the elevator except the railroad tracks. The first structure, a storage facility for lettuce and pea seed, was built by the Peninsula Grain Company.

In the 1920s it became a delivery and transfer station for local farmers who sent their produce to the Seattle metropolitan area.

In 1935 Cecil Dawley purchased the building. Dawley ran his feed and farm equipment business until 1941, and then he leased it to Western Farmers before selling it to the Clallam Co-Operative Association. The Clallam Co-Op operated the business, finishing the tower in the mid-1940s. The last train to pass the tower ran in 1985 to Port Townsend before the tracks were removed.

In the '50s and '60s 40 tons of grain were lifted by belt to the top and dropped into railroad cars every day. The Clallam grain elevator has walls made of one-inch by ten-inch wooden planks. They are stacked horizontally to create a solid wall of wood 10 inches thick and incredibly strong. No wonder the building is still standing proud and erect.

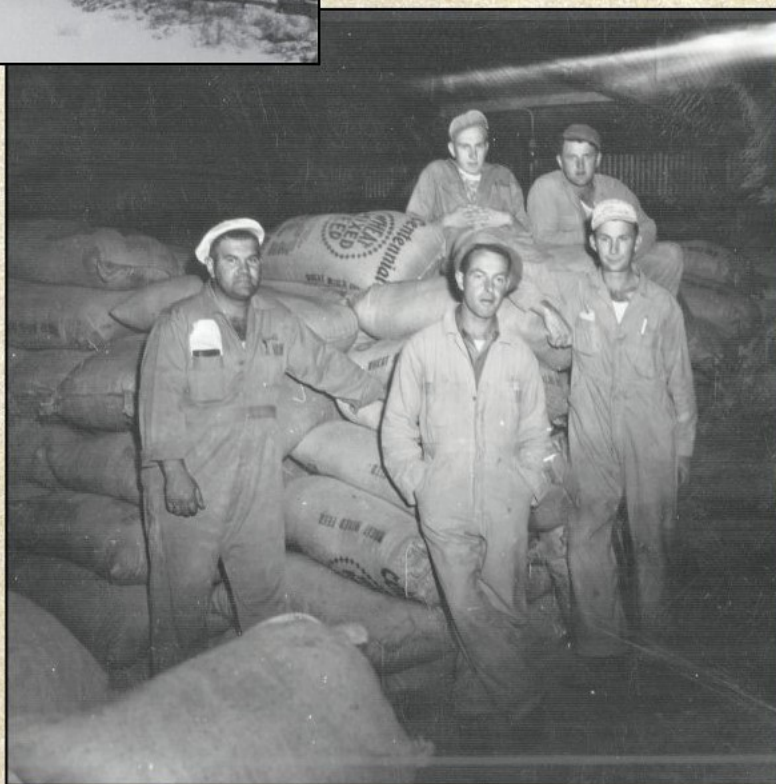
In the decades following WWII, Sequim farmers produced seed for cabbage, beets, mustard,

carrots, and other vegetables. Sequim was a thriving farm community, and there were at one time over 200 dairy cattle herds in the area. Somewhere along the way the price of milk did not keep up with costs and farmers looked for other opportunities. Today there are only two dairy farms left. Some creative farmers discovered a little gold mine in the late 1960s in the form of high-quality grass seed that was especially prized for golf courses. At one point the Sequim Prairie had the largest production of sod grass in the U.S. These farmers started the Dungeness Agricultural Supply, which bought the Sequim grain elevator in 1969.

The grain elevator ceased operations in 1977 ending a treasured bit of local history.

The property was recently purchased by a local family who are restoring the entire complex.

*Left: The grain elevator in snow*



*Above: Boys in the basement packing feed bags.  
Back row: Unkown, Dick Cays. Front: Matt Pavalunas, Lloyd Stipe, Earl Livingston*



**SEQUIM MUSEUM & ARTS**  
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and BLUE STAR FAMILIES present

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