Researcher of state’s artists wins Murray Morgan Award

Mrs. Dorothy (Dode) Trip of Tacoma, author of a valued reference work about Washington state artists, has received the Tacoma Historical Society’s annual Murray Morgan Award for recording local history.

She co-authored Washington State Art and Artists, 1850–1950 with Dr. Sherburne F. Cook Jr. It was published in 1992.

Since publication she has continued to research the state’s artists; and her card file, now consisting of information on more than 6,000 individuals, is the definitive repository for data on Washington artists, of which 789 are Tacoma artists. At present, she is working on an expanded second edition of her book.

continued on Page 2

Just in…
The Tacoma Historical Society has been offered storefront space on Broadway in Tacoma’s Antique Row that appears to be suited to our needs for an exhibit center. The THS board will act on this soon.

This photo of Pierce County’s grand old courthouse, taken in 1906, came into the Tacoma Historical Society’s possession through a long and circuitous route. Read about in on Page 2. The imposing sandstone structure at 1012 South G St. was built in the early 1890s at a cost of $743,000. It was demolished in 1959.
A photo album rescued in 1968 sheds light on Tacoma-Alaska connection

The photo of the Pierce County courthouse on page one came to the Tacoma Historical Society as part of a valuable collection and via a long and circuitous route.

It’s one of the photos donated by Mr. Dickie L. Byrd of Fairbanks, Alaska, who located the Tacoma Historical Society via our website.

As Mr. Byrd tells the story, “in 1968 my brother and I inventoried an old warehouse in Fairbanks… belonging to the Mike Ersig Estate. One of the items my brother was allowed to keep was a photograph album. Mr. Ersig took and developed a series of photographs on his trip to Alaska in 1906.

“Six years ago my brother gave me that album and said, ‘Here. These belong in Alaska.’

“I have turned over 82 photographs to our University Archives in Fairbanks that included the Fairbanks and Interior Alaska photos.”

This left Mr. Byrd with photos of Tacoma, Seattle and Sumner, Ketchikan, and Juneau. We are indebted to Mr. Byrd for sending us the Tacoma photos.

Some of the fun of working on local history is the eureka moment when you connect the dots. Mr. Byrd mentioned that some of the Ersig photos were of the James Wickersham House, which is preserved as part of a complex of historical attractions in Fairbanks. Wickersham, Alaska’s first territorial judge, built it in 1904.

In some satisfying correspondence, we were able to point out that prior to moving to Alaska Wickersham practiced law, was a probate judge and city attorney in Tacoma in the 1880s and 90s. He moved to Alaska in 1900. He served a number of terms as Alaska’s territorial delegate to the U.S. Congress. Wickersham died in 1939, and his ashes are interred at Tacoma Cemetery.

We can surmise that Ersig and Wickersham were friends. We know that Ersig was a well driller; aside from that we know little about him.

And if the Byrd name rings a bell, it’s because Mr. Byrd is related to the Byrds of Fern Hill and of the Byrd Mill. He is a native of Lebam, WA.

— Dale Wirsing

This and That

The society thanks:

• Wilma Peterson and Anita Dorman, for fielding the calls to THS’s phone line.
• Esther Keelean, for recording the pleasant message you hear when you dial the THS number
• Jon Landry, for evaluating the THS web site
• Oscar Peterson and Dr. Jerry Ramsey, for helping to impose a little order on the collection and inventory at the THS office.
• Andrew Fry’s information technology students at the University of Washington Tacoma for the work they have done on the Save Our Bridge website and on adding PayPal to the Tacoma Historical Society website.

Also…

• At the THS office, there’s a large box of 35 mm slides—mostly of family occasions, some of trips to California and Sweden. There is no evident connection to THS or Tacoma history. “A. Roberts” is written on a few of the boxes. If no one has claimed them by June 30, out they go.

Murray Morgan Award

The presentation was made at the society’s 15th annual meeting April 11 at Tacoma Public Library. Dr. Dale Wirsing, THS president, and Brian Kamens of the Northwest Room staff joined in presenting the award.

The society’s Murray Morgan Award honors the late Tacoma historian, teacher and author. Previous recipients have included Brian G. Kamens, Winnifred Olsen, Caroline Kellogg, Ottilie Markholt, Gary Fuller Reese, Ronald Magden, Cecelia Svinth Carpenter, Robert Tschida, Caroline Gallacci and Ron Karabaich, Charlotte Medlock, Jim Fredrickson, and the Tacoma-Pierce County Genealogical Society.
An opportunity
to own
your own set of
Herbert Hunt’s

Tacoma, Its History and Its Builders

The Tacoma Historical Society is republishing the classic account of
early-day Tacoma that has been the standard reference work since 1916.
Original copies are hard to find and expensive. You will want your own.

What historians say about Herbert Hunt’s Tacoma, Its History and Its Builders; a Half Century of Activity:

“Herbert Hunt’s adventurous story of Tacoma as it grew from a sawmill village to a world city is the finest narrative written so far. Hunt also gives a vivid account of the upper strata of Tacoma society.”

– Gary Fuller Reese
Noted Northwest historian and retired manager of Special Collections and the Northwest Room for Tacoma Public Library.

“Anyone wanting to understand Tacoma today must start with Herbert Hunt’s history. For almost a century historians have embraced his story of Tacoma’s development and relied on his portrait of a city created through the endeavors of many individuals. Making this work available again to the public provides a new opportunity to enjoy Hunt’s account of how this urban place came to be.”

– Caroline Gallacci, Ph.D.
Author, The City of Destiny and the South Sound, an Illustrated History of Tacoma and Pierce County.

Herbert Hunt

You will receive additional information and order forms in the mail shortly.
472-3738   www.tacomahistory.org
Tour of Homes set for 2005 run

The Tacoma Historical Society is proud to present its 12th annual Historic Homes Tour, April 30 and May 1.

Much of the 2005 tour is in the Allen C. Mason area of the North End, an area of grand homes settled largely in Tacoma’s Golden Age of Destiny. Mason came here in 1883 and soon created a real estate empire. His vision and civic spirit helped shape the Tacoma we know today.

Tour hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 30 and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. May 1. THS members in good standing may purchase tickets for $12 at the reception center. The ticket price for the general public is $15.

Proceeds benefit the THS museum fund.

Reception center for this year’s tour is St. Luke’s Memorial Episcopal Church, 3601 N. Gove St., originally constructed downtown in 1883. It was later dismantled, moved to its present site, and reassembled stone by stone. The new St. Luke’s was dedicated in 1947.

The tour also includes the 1898 Keeper’s Lodge at Point Defiance Park and seven notable residences.

Photos by Robert Tschida
The Tacoma Historical Society
presents

Historic Homes of Tacoma
Tour 2005

Tacoma North End
(Allen C. Mason Area)

April 30th & May 1st
Saturday 10 am to 5 pm
Sunday 1 pm to 5 pm

Tickets $15.00

Available starting Friday, April 15th at these outlets:
Pacific Northwest Shop • Stadium Thriftway
Columbia Bank locations: 21st & Pearl • Fircrest • South 19th & Union

Tickets also available for purchase April 30th & May 1st at the Reception Area
St. Lukes Episcopal Church • 3615 North Gove St.

Proceeds benefit Tacoma Historical Society Museum Fund
a 501(c)3 organization

www.tacomahistory.org
253-472-3738
The State of the Society: April 11, 2005

A report to the members, expanded from remarks at the annual meeting by Dr. Dale R. Wirsing, President.

It is sometimes difficult to remember that this organization is only 15 years old. There are many local historical societies that would envy our level of activity and accomplishments.

We have continued our regular activities – publishing the City of Destiny Newsletter, refining and expanding our website, www.tacomahistory.org, presenting monthly programs, assisting with such projects as the Ruston Way mill markers, and conducting the annual Tour of Historic Tacoma Homes.

A major emphasis this past year has been to increase the active, paid-up membership. Board members rolled up their sleeves, signed letters and stuffed envelopes so that we could reach members who had somehow forgotten to send in their renewal checks. In consequence our membership has grown from 202 at this time last year to 352.

At the same time, we are working on ways to add value to your membership. THS members will be able to buy Tour of Homes tickets at a lower price. And THS members will be offered a reduced price on the four volumes of Hunt’s History of Tacoma we are reprinting. You will receive a mailing about that soon.

We continue to look toward establishing a downtown exhibit center for Tacoma history. We are still identifying likely sites. Your board continues to work with our consultant, museum professional Chris Fiala Erlich. To strengthen our financial foundation, we have initiated an annual fund appeal. Your board members have given or pledged just under $5,000, and we have received other generous gifts.

We continue to assist, when possible, other organizations devoted to Tacoma’s heritage. We support the efforts of the Save Our Bridge organization, and we applaud the progress that the Working Waterfront Maritime Museum has made toward the maritime history and activity center to be called the Foss Waterway Seaport.

As we look ahead, we will place renewed emphasis on collecting, preserving, and making available books, documents, memorabilia and artifacts that illuminate Tacoma history. At the same time we will intensify our efforts to catalog and properly care for our existing collection.

We foresee an expanded role in publishing. We assisted J.N. Nerheim in publishing his History of Lumber Mills in ‘Old Town’. And of course we are involved in the major effort of republishing the classic Hunt’s History of Tacoma.

We believe Tacoma history is a story well worth telling – of people who came here from many parts of the world to build a new city and new lives in a favored spot on Puget Sound. We invite your continued support.

Help Wanted

As the Tacoma Historical Society moves forward on establishing a downtown exhibit center and expanding its publishing, we have an increasing need for such skills as:
- Marketing;
- Merchandising;
- Retailing;
- Accounting and finance; and
- Grant writing.

Let us know if you can help 472-3738 or info@tacomahistory.org.

Do you enjoy reading other people’s mail, especially if it’s from an earlier generation? Do you enjoy looking at old photos? Do you like to look at reminders of long-ago events? Are you a fan of Antiques Road Show?

If you answered yes to any of these, the Tacoma Historical Society Collections Committee has a deal for you. We have donations that need to be documented, and new items keep arriving.472-3738info@tacomahistory.org.

Volunteer editor for the society’s newsletter. Editorial and computer skills needed, along with familiarity with Tacoma history. 472-3738 or info@tacomahistory.org.
A tribute to
FREDERICK THOMAS HALEY
By Ronald E. Magden

The heart of Tacoma’s liberal establishment stopped on April 5, 2005. On that day Fred Haley passed away. He was 92.

Haley was a successful businessman with the common touch. He loved the idea of change particularly as it affected society. Though born into a wealthy family, he numbered among his lifelong friends loggers, longshoremen and teamsters. When he was on the Tacoma school board he sought to place the best teachers where the students needed the most help.

In the late 1950s and ’60s he served on the Washington State Board Against Discrimination; deciding highly emotional cases dealing with minority employment and housing.

His most important decision came when he was school board president. He voted against firing a teacher accused of being a Communist. Haley took out a full-page ad in The News Tribune stating that anyone who had proof that Margaret Schuddakopf was a Communist should present their evidence. No one ever came forth with the proof.

Most of all, Fred Haley loved history and literature. Even in his 90s he could quote passages from the great historians, poets, and literati. When asked what his epitaph should be, Fred Haley replied, “I tried to improve society.”

Tacoma historian Ronald Magden is the author of a yet-to-be-published biography of Fred Haley.

THS fund appeal will build base for exhibit center

The Tacoma Historical Society has launched its first annual fund appeal with encouraging results.

The intent is to strengthen the society’s finances as it moves toward opening a downtown exhibit center devoted to Tacoma history.

Members of the board have made or pledged substantial leadership gifts. Details of the fund appeal will be mailed to THS members in the near future.

To date, $6,650 in leadership gifts has been recorded. The first-year goal is $14,000.

The society gratefully acknowledges the following gifts:

$1,000 and above
Dr. James Hoard
John Washington
Beverlee Weston

$500-999
Marie and Charles Hayden
Charlotte and Leonard Medlock
Dale and Marlene Wirsing

$250-499
Stacy Augustine
Gerry Eysaman
Thomas Hudson
Ron Magden
Wilma and Larry Peterson

$100-249
Bill Baarsma
Mike Lonergan

Wanted
For our City of Destiny Newsletter
Original Articles on Tacoma history
Reminiscences … Biography … Even poetry
Editor, Tacoma Historical Society, PO Box 1865 Tacoma WA 98401

In memoriam
Recent months have been marked by the deaths of two friends of Tacoma history:
• Caroline M. Kellogg, 83, died Feb. 4. She wrote the “Time Machine,” a column about Tacoma history, for The News Tribune. She co-authored Tacoma, a Pictorial History with Harry Martin. She received the Tacoma Historical Society’s Murray Morgan Award in 1994.
• Longtime loyal THS member Benjamin James Docherty died March 27 at age 87.
TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Regular meetings

June 13, 2005 – Monday, 7 pm
Tacoma Public Library

“Tales Tombstones Tell”
Christopher Engh of the Tacoma Cemetery staff will tell of Tacoma’s early-day notables and where they now repose. We will hear of Job Carr, M.M. McCarver, J.W. Sprague, Francis W. Cushman and Angelo V. Fawcett, to mention just a few.

July 11, 2005 – Monday, 6:30 pm
Walking Tour of Downtown Tacoma’s historic buildings. Always a popular event, the tour will be led by Brian Kamens.

August 8, 2005 – Monday, 6:30 pm
Ruston Way Walking Tour. Our leader will be artist Paul R. Michaels, who will tell of the great lumber mills that once lined the Ruston Way waterfront. Meet at the parking lot opposite Harbor Lights.

Join THS Today
Membership in THS is open to all and is tax deductible.
Individual $25
Family $35
Corporate $75

Please make checks payable to:
The Tacoma Historical Society
Send to: Membership Chairman
The Tacoma Historical Society
P.O. Box 1865
Tacoma, WA 98401

Phone: 253-472-3738
www.tacomahistory.org