

# The Olympia Historical Society

## eNewsletter - Summer, 2008

[www.OlympiaHistory.org](http://www.OlympiaHistory.org)



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### Message from President Lanny Weaver

Please join us on Saturday August 9th for our summer general meeting at the United Methodist Church at 1224 Legion Way, starting at 10 AM. Our featured speaker is Karen Johnson, the director of the Bigelow House Museum and an expert on the subject of stagecoaches. Her talk is entitled, "Ninety Miles of Bad Road," which will include an overview of stagecoach history and a discussion on the growth of stagecoach lines in southwest Washington. I have heard Karen speak on the subject before and you are in for a treat. Karen's presentations are always well researched, cleverly delivered and include fascinating photographs, maps and documents. Karen will also speak on last year's Territorial Express Stagecoach event and give us a preview of this year's stagecoach run.

The Olympia Historical Society will be coordinating the opening night's festivities for the 2008 stagecoach run. Many thanks go to Roger Easton for all of his efforts in organizing the event to take place Thursday, September 18th at the American Heritage Campground in Tumwater. Please stay tuned

The board of the Olympia Historical Society recently awarded a lifetime membership to Winnifred Olsen in honor of her many achievements in local history in Olympia and all of Thurston County. Winnie's career in education, her dedication to human rights, and her citizen service on many local boards and commissions has spanned decades. She is a superb example to all of us in how to be an effective community advocate. Her oral history biography, "You're Making History Now" was completed in 2006 and is available from OHS for \$17. Please [contact OHS](#) to arrange to receive a copy.



Winnie Olsen and Lois Fenske

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### OHS Board Member honored by City and State

On June 16th, OHS Board member [Roger Easton](#) was honored by the [Olympia Heritage Commission](#), and City of Olympia for the Lifetime Achievement Award for Preservation in Olympia. Easton, who has been sitting on this commission since 1985, was honored to be Chair during the 1989 100th Anniversary of Statehood. [Washington Secretary of State Sam Reed](#) wrote the following letter that was read during the meeting:

June 16, 2008

Dear Roger,

Congratulations on receiving the Historical Preservation Lifetime Achievement Award. It is well deserved. You have selflessly invested an incalculable number of volunteer hours to preserving our state's history and making it accessible to others. By volunteering your time and talents to local heritage organizations and to the State Archives, assisting others with their family historical research, transcribing thousands of historic records for the Digital Archives, and in many other ways, you have enriched the lives of our citizens. After 35 years of teaching in Washington's Public Schools and Colleges, you are still making a positive difference by connecting our citizens with their past. You have exemplified the finest attributes that merit the Historic Preservation Lifetime Achievement Award. Thank you for all of your many valuable contributions.

Sincerely,

Sam Reed  
Secretary of State

Easton was amazed that members from all the boards, groups, individuals he has worked with showed up at the meeting. Later a council person remarked, when you left, there was no one at the meeting. Easton is so grateful for all the friends who came for the occasion, and wishes to thank all them for taking time from their busy day!

[Video: June 16th Olympia City Council Meeting.](#)

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[Video: June 16th Olympia City Council Meeting.](#)

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### **Feature: Olympia in the 1850s.**

In 1908 Olympia Pioneer Robert Frost described Olympia in 1858 when he first arrived. The article serves as a valuable snapshot of Olympia in both the 1850s and 1908, and illustrates how few early pioneer era structures survive in Olympia. Transcribed by Roger Easton and edited by Edward Echtle. Thanks to Drew Crooks who found the article.



IMAGE IN OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

[Click here for the article: pdf](#)

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### **Olympia Historical Society Speakers Bureau**

During the last six years, the Olympia Historical Society has supplied speakers on historical topics to many groups and organizations. OHS volunteers are available to speak on topics from local history. In addition, OHS is looking for volunteers to add their expertise to our speakers bureau. Interested parties should contact Lois Fenske: [lfenske@comcast.net](mailto:lfenske@comcast.net) or 357-5758

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### **Notes from Local Author Nellie E. Robertson: "History and Fiction are Wed"**

Five of the novels I have written blend history and fiction. *Hannah* is the story of a strong woman who loses her young daughter to illness during the Civil War and searches for her husband in the south after the conflict finding no trace of him. Her widowed brother in Olympia asks for her help in raising his six-year-old daughter and she complies. She makes the long journey around the Horn in a sailing vessel along with two Olympia firemen escorting the town's first fire engine from New York to the frontier town.

Love blossoms along with trials that would conquer a lesser woman. The cover of the book shows the Gold Bar Restaurant where the first territorial legislature met. The site is now the Bread Peddler. Other historical places and events appear throughout the novel.

*Heartache* is my last novel and has Olympia as its base during World War II. Again, history is woven around the main characters; a sailor in the Pacific, a soldier who goes through five major battles in Europe, an airman who pilots his B-17 over Europe, and two sisters living in Olympia. Over forty people shared their stories with me and parts of those stories appear in the book along with historical information gleaned from a number of sources.

My other three historical novels take place in Monroe and Everett in Snohomish County. *Kathryn's Courage* tells the story of a spinster school teacher from the east who comes west to marry a man with whom she had corresponded but never met. They homestead on the banks of the Snoqualmie River. Natural and human stumbling blocks threaten the marriage.

*Wellington Wisdom* is about a young newspaper woman trapped at Wellington by snow slides. She lives through the 1910 Wellington Disaster in the Cascades' Stevens Pass, only one of eight passengers to survive. Ninety-four others died in the avalanche. Finally, *Beyond Wellington* is a sequel that chronicles life in Everett and Monroe through World War I.

*Heartache* is undergoing the publishing process and hardback copies should be available by the end of August. Autographed copies of all these books can be purchased from me or found on-line at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and other major booksellers. The price is \$20 per book except for *Heartache* since the publisher has't set a price yet.

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## Research Notes

- **KONRAD SCHNEIDER.** For a book about Konrad and Albertina Schneider of Olympia and Mud Bay, I would appreciate any information on this family and their descendants. Contact Deb Ross at (360) 943-2634.

Are you doing your own research on local history? Are you looking for folks who might share your special interest? Space permitting, the Newsletter will post your request on our Bulletin Board. This service is FREE to members; we request a \$2.00 donation from nonmembers. Please keep your request brief and include contact information. Contact OHS for more information or to submit your research query.

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## Calendar

### **Thursday, August 7, 2:00pm: Dedication of The Pioneers' Memorial at the Munro Farm**

Ralph and Karen Munro extend an invitation to the historical community to attend the **Dedication of The Pioneers' Memorial** at their home on Mud Bay in Olympia, Washington. The Pioneers' Memorial is about a half-mile walk from the house. Gates will be open so you can drive to the site.

#### Directions:

- Take Interstate 5 to Exit 104. This is Highway 101 toward Aberdeen and Shelton. Go to the third exit, which is The Evergreen State College-Mud Bay Road
- On this exit stay to the left and go about a mile toward the College. Just before the campus, turn left on 17th Ave NW.
- Go exactly 4/10 of a mile on 17th and turn left on Houston Road. Houston is hard to see.
- Follow Houston to 5041 and turn down our driveway

### **Saturday August 9: Summer general Member meeting.**

Featured presentation: "Ninety Miles of Bad Road," by Karen Johnson, Director of the Bigelow House Museum and an expert on the subject of stagecoaches. The presentation will include an overview of stagecoach history and a discussion on the growth of stagecoach lines in southwest Washington. Karen will also speak on last year's Territorial Express Stagecoach event and give us a preview of this year's stagecoach run.

Location: United Methodist Church at 1224 Legion Way, starting at 10 AM.

### **September 19-21: Territorial Express Stagecoach Run**

Information at [www.territorialexpress.com](http://www.territorialexpress.com)  
Sponsored by Tumwater Historical Association

### **November 15: General Member Meeting**

Program: Scott Williams will present information on the archeology of paleo-Indian sites in the Olympia area

**All OHS meetings are free- public welcome. Programming and events are supported by donations and annual memberships in OHS.**

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### **Support OHS: Become a Member**

[Download Membership Form \[pdf\]](#)

Mail Checks payable to "Olympia Historical Society" to:

Olympia Historical Society  
PO Box 6064  
Olympia, WA 98507-6064.

Please include your name and contact information, including phone number and email address. Dues also accepted at scheduled meetings.

Annual membership dues categories, as defined in our bylaws, are:

- \$10.00 Student/Senior members (Seniors are defined as 65 years or