

WILLAMETTE HERITAGE CENTER Fall/Winter Newsletter 2018

Transition and Self-Reflection

James K. Phelps, ACFRE, Interim Executive Director

Loyal supporters of the Willamette Heritage Center, like you, will be delighted to know that a year of transition and self-reflection will soon result in new leadership to the organization. You may have noted the hiring of an interim Executive Director last December. During this time of transition, the organization completed an organizational audit, created an organizational plan to guide the organization, and oversaw the sale of two assets (a telecommunications easement to the water tower and the sale of Salem Heights Hall) that allowed the organization to pay off all debts and to restore a reserve.

Interviews for a new Executive Director have begun. We look forward to new, stable leadership that will begin the next chapter for the Willamette Heritage Center. You may ask, "How will this be different than previous hires?" One of the findings of the organizational audit was that our dedicated staff was undercompensated in comparison to other similar nonprofits. The Board of Directors recently made the move to increase wages and add benefits for employees, in order to recruit and retain the best and the brightest to fulfill our mission. The organizational audit also clarified what the organization really needs from executive leadership and is using those findings to guide the hiring process.

This may seem like a lot of detail for those of you who just love the Willamette Heritage Center site and all that it offers in historic preservation and programming. We want to keep you informed because we need your continued support to protect this valuable community asset. The Willamette Heritage Center depends heavily upon community contributions and volunteers, as most nonprofits do. You truly are the ones who have enabled the Willamette Heritage Center to continue. We hope you enjoy hearing about our work as outlined in this newsletter. We can't thank you enough for all your support!

Congratulations to our 2018 Heritage Award recipients!



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WHC | From the Archives By Kylie Pine, Curator and Collections Manager



Figure 1: Wedding Portrait of Raphael D. Whelan and Lenora Finney Whelan, 1918. WHC 0080.008.0040.001.08

I am constantly surprised in the library and archives how often one line of inquiry bleeds into new discoveries in another. This past week I started digging into the past of a wedding photo. The catalog record reported an inscription on the back of this photo as "R.E.Whelan – Apr. 29, 1918 #15, 619." I have learned that you can't always trust the name on the back of the photo to necessarily describe the subject on the front, but I set out to see if I could find any evidence connecting this photograph to the Whelan family. I began with a general search for R.E.Whelan on the subscription genealogy website Ancestry.com. If I could find a marriage record for an R.E.Whelan with the date of April 29, 1918, I would feel pretty confident in identifying the portrait sitters as Mr. and Mrs.Whelan. I might even get their full names. Search and search as I might, I could find no R.E.Whelans anywhere.

By this point, I decided to go straight to the source and pull out the original photo. It turns out that the original cataloguer had made a typo. The name on the back read R.D.Whalen. This lead to two newspaper articles detailing the 50th Wedding anniversary celebrations for the couple in 1968. This confirmed the wedding date, but neglected to give either of their first names. Looking through Marion County Marriage records, thankfully filed by date of wedding, I was able to pull out names of Raphael David Whelan and Lenora Finney. A newspaper search yielded the colorful story of their wedding day.

"The marriage of Miss Lenora Finney and Raphael D.Whelan came as a surprise to many of the young friends of the couple, the first part of the week," noted *Oregon Statesman* society editor Florence Elizabeth Nichols in the May 5th edition of her column:

It was held Monday morning at St. Joseph's Catholic church with Rev. Father Buck officiating.

The bride, who is 19 years old, is the eldest daughter of Mrs. Ed Finney of Salem and the groom is the youngest son of Mrs. M.Whelan, of Rosedale. Little Gilta Mae Hunt of Woodburn a cousin of the bride acted as ringbearer. Miss Emma Finney of Sheridan, was the maid of honor and Gus Whelan, a brother of the groom was best man.

The bride was attractive in her gown of white and carried a bouquet of brides' roses and sweet peas. A filmy veil was held in place by little bunches of white sweet peas. The bridesmaid wore a dress of blue and carried pink sweet peas.

Immediately after the ceremony a wedding breakfast was served at the home of the bride's mother. The couple made their home in Rosedale.

As I was filing photographs later that afternoon I saw a familiar couple staring back at me. It must have been fate, as this photograph is a spitting image of one published in the Whelan's 50th anniversary announcement. It had been unidentified in our collections, but I giddily added the information I had gleaned that morning to the record, happy that a numbering error had brought me to that very folder that very day.



Figure 2: Raphael and Lenora Whelan in 1968, celebrating their 50th Wedding anniversary. WHC 0080.008.043.

What surprises might be in your family tree?

WHC | Caboose Club, Community Partners, Donations, Grantors, and Sponsors



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WHC | Education and Volunteer Update By Erica Osorio, Education & Volunteer Coordinator



I was hired in January as the Education and Volunteer Coordinator for the Willamette Heritage Center, and these past nine months have been quite an adventure. The bulk of my job concerns scheduling group tours, coordinating docents to lead group tours, and ensuring a successful visit for all involved. Spring afforded me the opportunity to lead elementary school students in activities like Pioneer World and Finding Oregon. Having worked as a classroom teacher for ten years, I feel comfortable teaching lessons. But little did I know I would also need acquire new skills so that I could teach kids how to use a drop spindle to spin wool, weave a bookmark using a straw loom, and make a pioneer toy out of a wooden button and a piece of string. It's been a steep learning curve, but it's been a lot of fun as well.

This spring the education department launched a new version of the historic houses tour geared toward school groups: the "Experience Houses Tour." Rather than a traditional tour, students are presented with a more interactive, hands-on, and child-centered experience as they visit the houses. For example, in the Lee house, we have a mini-lesson titled "Letters from Home" in which they learn about Anna Maria Pittman (Jason Lee's first wife), read one of her letters, pass around feather and steel nib pens, and practice letter folding. In the Parsonage, students get a chance to play an I-Spy game in which they explore the house looking for information about the historical person on their card and report their findings back to the group. In the Boon house, they might encounter John and Martha Boon as performed by living history docents. We had twenty schools participate in this new tour and received positive feedback from teachers and chaperones.

So far this year, schools brought over 2,000 students to our site. Due to increasing class sizes, teachers are requesting school tours for larger and larger groups. The Experience Houses Tour is one way we are working to accommodate these big groups. I had one second grade teacher request a Mill Tour, the Kalapuya Activity, and the Experience Houses Tour for a group of over 70 students. It took about four hours, and all told, I had 12 volunteer docents involved in pulling it off – and the kids loved it.

Which leads me to the other aspect of my job, that of volunteer coordinator. We have an amazing group of volunteers here at the Willamette Heritage Center, and I have enjoyed getting to know many of them.



Before the spring school tour season started, we offered a couple of docent trainings for the volunteer positions of Hands-on History Leader and Living History Leader; in so doing, we managed to recruit several new docents for those on-call positions. We plan to offer another round of docent trainings this winter. To express our gratitude to our dedicated volunteers, the WHC staff hosted a volunteer appreciation luncheon in July for our docents, caboose, front desk, and Library Archive Center volunteers; in October we hosted another luncheon for our fiber arts volunteers. We could not do what we do without our volunteers.



The Willamette Heritage Center (WHC) is conveniently located in downtown Salem, just three blocks from the Oregon State Capitol at 12th and Mill Street. The WHC offers an attractive combination for any meeting or event. WHC's convenient location is home to a charming, fiveacre, park-like site, with 14 historic buildings and homes, including the Thomas Kay Woolen Mill. All are on the National Register of Historic Places. This one-of-a-kind site is picturesque and peaceful with a millrace stream dividing the lush landscape. WHC offers multiple meeting spaces, which can accommodate intimate parties of 50 or less, to larger groups of 300-350. Free parking with 200 spaces is available on-site.

Your rental fees support the Willamette Heritage Center's

ongoing mission to inspire, connect and encourage understanding. WHC engages the community to preserve and share our rich heritage. We experience the magic of our historic setting every day and hope you'll join us for your next event. Build your future on a foundation of history, community, and longevity by holding your special event in one of our venues. We can't wait to help you start planning! We look forward to sharing all the advantages of holding your next meeting or event at the Willamette Heritage Center. We will make your meeting or event a success! To learn more, visit https://www.willametteheritage.org/host_an_event/



Make A Lasting Difference for the Willamette Heritage Center— Help Us Connect Generations!

These days, it means more than ever to know you are making a real difference.



It feels great to make a distinctive investment in the lives of children, families, and seniors in our region! Consider naming the Willamette Heritage Center in your estate plan or as a beneficiary to a donor-advised fund, or make a donation in honor of your own kids, grandkids, a teacher, or another special someone who has made a positive impact in your life. The legacy you create today is absolutely GUARANTEED to make a meaningful difference for regional youth and for all our visitors. We invite you to "pay it forward" with the WHC.

Please visit <u>https://www.willametteheritage.org/planned-giving/</u> for useful information, or contact Helen Shafran, Development Director, at (503) 585-7012 ext. 228 or <u>helens@willametteheritage.org</u>.

We gratefully acknowledge our contributors for their support of our work connecting generations in the Mid-Willamette Valley. We could not do what we do without your partnership all year long! The following friends have contributed since January 1, 2018:

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Do we have your preferred contact information? Your US Mail address, email address, and phone number are all very important to us; please call it all in to us at (503) 585-7012, email it to info@willametteheritage.org, or tell us on your gift envelope (enclosed) when you mail it back to us. Thanks for helping us serve you better!

WHC | Facilities and Operations Update By Sean O'Harra, Operations Director



This time last year I was writing about the arrival of the historic caboose that was donated to the museum and how excited we were with the addition to the collection. Today I want to give an update on the progress of the restoration of the caboose.

Since last summer a volunteer group led by Christopher Hackett and Ed Austin has been working diligently on getting the caboose ready to be part of the museum tour. When the caboose arrived last summer, the exterior was in bad shape and that was the first priority for restoration. The roof was restored and reroofed and then was tarped to prevent water from getting into the interior. Then they tackled the siding. Custom siding was ordered, primed and painted then the large task of replacing the old siding began. Salem Alliance Church was gracious enough to allow us to use the old Aramark Building to prime, paint and store the 325 boards that are being used for the siding restoration. We also reached out to the Salem-Keizer School District Career Technical Education Center (CTEC) to assist with the reproduction of the caboose steps. This was an excellent opportunity for the metal shop students to learn real world skills by fabricating those steps from the original rusted out steps that were just barely hanging onto the caboose. They did an amazing job and we were just charged for the costs of the materials. Creekside Rotary assisted with installing a barrier around the caboose to hold in the ballast rock and add

to the aesthetics of the site. The caboose crew has also visited other cabooses in the area that are of similar vintage and in different stages of restoration to make sure the restoration is authentic to our caboose. This is a very exciting project and we encourage anyone who would like to volunteer or donate towards the project to contact us.

This summer also was bittersweet as our long-time grounds keeper, Liz Boland, retired from the museum. Liz started with the Easter Seals Senior Employment Program in 2007 and was brought onto the staff that fall. Liz has been vital to keeping the site looking good, mowing the lawns, pulling the weeds and raking the leaves. This isn't a small task because of the size of the site. Liz did all this on just 20 hours a week and with occasional assistance from Jobs Plus and other Easter Seals participants. We would like to thank Liz for all her hard work and dedication! Liz left the grounds keeping position in good hands, though. Toby Lanham began working at the WHC are part of the Jobs Plus

program earlier this summer and has now transitioned to the grounds keeper role. Toby has been busy learning about the site, catching up on some projects and developing new strategies moving forward. Again, if anyone would like to volunteer to help with the grounds maintenance of the WHC, please contact us.

Please make some time to visit the museum this fall and enjoy what we have to offer our community.



WHC | Upcoming Events



WeGO 2018 Traveling Show Color Gone Wild September 28 – December 8, 2018 Monday through Saturday, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm We are partnering with the Weaving Guilds of Oregon to host their 2018 Travelling show entitled Color Gone Wild. This juried show features 67 hand-woven pieces made by Oregon weavers.

This WeGO exhibit comes to the WHC through the generous sponsorship of the family of Viola 'Milo' Pearmine.

Magic at the Mill

December 19th-23rd • 5:30 – 8:00pm Thousands of twinkling lights, children's activities, photos with Santa, live music, entertainment, shopping, and more!

Romance: Stories of Love and Passion in the Mid-Willamette Valley

Wed. January 23, 2019 - Membership Preview Thur. January 24, 2019 – Sat. April 20, 2019

2018 "MAGIC AT THE MILL" SPONSORSHIPS STILL AVAILABLE-**SIGN UP NOW!**

As a public trust, a community center, and a non-profit educational organization, the WHC relies on the sponsorship support of our community's citizens, businesses and organizations. We constantly promote our wonderful sponsors to our visitors, participants and patrons, from on-site signage and keepsake programs, to a variety of online and print media, as well as banners and posters all around town.

Sponsorships at each level make a truly significant difference in what we can accomplish, strengthening our foundation and helping ensure our ability to provide education and access for all community members as well as an increasingly diverse array of visitors from far and wide. We work hard to provide quality programs and events, be sustainable, and hold the line on what we charge; it matters deeply that we welcome as many people



shopping, and more!



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as possible to this unique site that not only tells the rich history of this place but also helps make sense of it. There's simply no other gem in Oregon like the Willamette Heritage Center.

Check out our MANY unique valueadded opportunities for Magic at the Mill sponsors in 2018—on our website at www.willametteheritage. org/2018sponsorships. We have a match for your carefully planned promotions budget and goals! Print, complete, and mail in your sponsorship form, or contact Helen Shafran, WHC Development Director, at (503) 585-7012 ext. 228 or helens@ willametteheritage.org.



Willamette Heritage Center 1313 Mill St SE, Suite 200 Salem, OR 97301

The Willamette Heritage Center is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed from the merger of the Mission Mill Museum and the Marion County Historical Society.WHC is not owned or operated by any government agency and is supported through grant funding, private donations, and its membership.

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New Whatsit



Can you guess what this is? It will feature prominently in our next summer's exhibit.

Find out in our next newsletter!

Lead Tours of the Mill



Do you have a passion for history? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge with others?

Join our docent program and become a mill tour guide. Our next training is scheduled for January.

For more information, contact our Education & Volunteer Coordinator, Erica Osorio, at <u>ericao@</u> <u>willametteheritage.org</u> or 503-585-7012 ext. 254.

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