



YOU ARE INVITED!

Magnolia Historical Society — Annual Event and Meeting



Troops marching past the Post Exchange and Gymnasium on the parade ground. Soldiers are wearing standard service uniform issued circa 1903. Photo by Asahel Curtis.

Fort Lawton: THEN & NOW

Thursday, April 16, 2015
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Magnolia Lutheran Church
Fireside Room
2414 – 31st Avenue West



Post Exchange & Gymnasium building remains today as one of Fort Lawton's Historic District buildings. Photo by Monica Wooton 2000.

In Magnolia's Backyard: How Fort Lawton and Its Historic District Came About and Where It's Going

Presented by

Mimi Sheridan, Historian and Historic Preservation Specialist
Gary Blakeslee, THRIVE Communities

MHS 2015-2016 Board will be elected
Refreshments provided

MHS HAPPENINGS

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Snapshot in Time: Magnolia - A History of Volunteering and Making Magnolia Memories

by Monica Wooton

THEN: Over 15 years ago...the process was started that gave Magnolians a major gift of written history in *Magnolia: Memories & Milestones*. Written and published by a dedicated corps of volunteers.

The volunteer Board of the Magnolia Community Club (MCC) procured two \$10,000 grants from Department of Neighborhoods. I had just retired as an MCC board member in charge of their history committee when I was asked to come up with a process that would capture history in some kind of book form. Nobody was quite sure what it would look like or how it could be done. I knew it would be more volunteering, a whole lot more, if I accepted!

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Snapshot in Time: History of Volunteering (continued from page 1)

Author Aleua Frare, volunteering for the MCC back in 1976, generously gave her time and produced an undocumented view of historical fact tied together by folksy yarns and urban legends. I wanted something more. And, I'd have to get a whole bunch of volunteers willing to give a whole bunch of time and energy to get it done.

If I did it that (and, I was quite unsure if I would or could), I knew I wanted professional well-written, well-sourced and well-illustrated stories of substance written by Magnolians, making it even more unlikely. Smart, capable folks bound together only by altruistic ideals, a love of a common neighborhood and no money-making motives.

I set up a "Write Your Magnolia Memories" booth at Magnolia's SummerFest, to see who else I could lure into doing professional work for free. The first person to take the bait was a skinny guy doing wheelies in his wheel-chair. He pulled up to the booth, did a spin move (and, from somewhere on his person) magically produced a self-published volume on his colorful Magnolia childhood. That was Hal Will. That was so Hal Will. He had contracted polio in his early twenties and it left him a paraplegic. But, Will was all about opening windows when doors were shut. He immediately loved the impossible idea of doing this book. He immediately volunteered.

I reached out to people like Bob Kildall, of Discovery Park fame, who let me know he found me brash; but, was intrigued enough to join up. Kildall recommended Scott Smith the guy "who fought Metro". My Mom's friends, Patty Small and Joan Santucci, both excellent writers, signed up. My daughter Jenny's friend, Joy Carpine, still in journalism school at the UW, wanted to write a chapter. My writing group at the time produced four of the authors: Nancy Worssam, Sam Sutherland, Gail Martini-Peterson and John Hendron. Some were retired, some stay at homes, some had full-time occupations.

I designed for each writer a portfolio with all kinds of writing examples, history writing materials, style sheets, lists of contacts, subjects, sources. Why that didn't scare everybody off, I'll never understand. We began a long, time-consuming process which included long monthly meetings at the Magnolia Library to talk, exchange drafts, monitor progress and somehow, somehow put together "our" book.

Every writer settled on a topic or two. Some wrote about their childhoods or researched early life on Magnolia through interviews or academic research. Worssam started at the very beginning with the Native American's and Native American experts. Experts came forward for no charge. People pulled out scrapbooks and photo albums, folks renewed friendships from their childhoods. Volunteer peer editors encouraged, kindly critiqued, help craft draft after draft. The Henry A Smith *Magnolia's First Pioneer* chapter, that I wrote, had 27 drafts! Santucci proved to be my inspirational peer editor, all the while, doing her own chapter of the history of the Village.



Will with boat on borrowed trailer headed for the beach. Photo courtesy Hal Will



Author Hal Will, before polio. He and his dad launch his boat, made in their Magnolia basement, at Wolf (Wolfe) Creek Beach, 32nd Ave. W. Will wrote: "A couple of years later the boat was smashed in a storm. I cried."

Photo courtesy Hal Will

We combed archives. We learned about the Polk Directory, Kroll and Baist maps. We went to the periodicals room at UW Suzzallo Library to go through the old Magnolia News. We wondered and wrote; and, wondered and wrote more, month after month. We went on time consuming interviews: all over Magnolia, to the Seattle Yacht Club to meet with the Chamber brothers, sons of the first hardware store owner on Magnolia, to the University to discuss fish and fishing with the Fisheries Department to get a context for Fishermen's Terminal. All of us donating our time and getting others to do the same. Many authors volunteered to spend their own money on the project. And, did.

Authors produced pictures and proof of what they were writing about. Everyone had to have citations in endnotes, captions, proper credit for photos, copyrights and correct formats in Modern Language Association style. All time and talents given freely-no charge, our pleasure...and, it most often was!

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Snapshot in Time: History of Volunteering (continued from page 2)

Rob Hitchings volunteered to work under Colonel James Collins, at the Fort Lawton Army Reserve, preparing for the long awaited Korean War medaling. Hitchings wrote of that and his father's experience in that war, while he and his Mom, the Editor of the Magnolia News at the time, were left behind. Magnolian, Roy Scully, famous Seattle Times Photographer, volunteered to do "now" shots.

In the end, for three months, Smith and I traveled to West Seattle nearly every day, all day and into the nights to work with Paul Langland on the final book design. Smith logged in thousands more volunteer hours, gas and food money to make the book a reality.



Main Perpetrators: Front to back, left to right. 1st row: Joy Carpine & Petey, Hal Will, John Hendron. 2nd row: Scott Smith, Monica Wooton, Patty Small, Roy Scully. 3rd row: Jonathon Wooton, Joan Santucci, Rob Hitchings, Shirley Will, Betty Ivie. 4th row: Gail Peterson-Martini, Cindy Howell, Rob Wilson. Back row: Steve Erickson, Nancy Worssam, Dan Kerlee. Invisible: Claudia Callan, Bob Kildall, Rick Malsed, Sisi Sedgewick, Mimi Sheridan, Sam Sutherland. Photo courtesy Paul Dorpat

Magnolia: Memories & Milestones was presented in December of 2000, just in time for Christmas. Quickly selling out 2 printings, a third was done. It was awarded the Virginia Folkes Award from the Association of King County Historical Organizations (AKCHO).

The preface of the book began with me saying: "I will be retiring from a 25 year "career" of volunteerism at the end of this project. If only every one of us had the privilege of 25 years of service to devote to causes we believed in, what a better world it would be!"

Little did I know: from that band of 13 volunteer authors the Magnolia Historical Society (MHS) became a 501(c)3 non-profit in 2001. These begat new volunteers, doing new things for Magnolia history, me continuing to be one of them.

Now: Santucci, Kildall, Will, Small, Malsed, Scully, Hendron have passed on. All leave us with a huge loss of ready, generous service and a generation of memories. But, they leave behind a grand legacy of generosity and a clear sense of the place they called home.

Writing remains the main mission of the Society which produced a second volume, **Magnolia: Making More Memories** in 2007, having 32 volunteer writers; and, also nominated for the Virginia Folkes Award. Hard cover books are falling out of fashion. Sales of the Magnolia books are slow. MHS writing workshops produce new memoir writers. The hope for a third corps of volunteer writers dealing with Magnolia in the 50's and 60's lingers.

Nearly all long-standing volunteer organizations on Queen Anne and Magnolia struggle now to get new, younger people committed, involved and in leadership positions. The Historical Society is now without a permanent president and is seeking new Board members. The MCC also needs new Board members. Two parents working, kids in elite sports, Facebook, Twitter and texting seem to be replacing "face-time", serving on Boards or going to meetings.

Volunteering, the only reason so much award-winning history about Magnolia exists, that MHS exists, the only reason our wonderful neighborhood is what it is, seems to becoming a part of the past. I still have hope: young "x and y gens" and newly-retired "boomers" prove it isn't so by serving as a local volunteer.

You can volunteer to join the MHS Board, purchase the Magnolia history books and learn more about this place called Magnolia written by volunteers by going to www.magnoliahistoricalsociety.org



We consult on history projects and are informally collecting writing/photos of life on Magnolia in the 1950-60's

If you want to write about Magnolia's history, have written a memoir about growing up in Magnolia, or have old Magnolia photos, let us know. We can help and would love to add them to our collection. We have an archive at the University of Washington for photos and documents/ephemera so history items can be collected and protected for future generations. Call (206) 284-2430



MHS Board for 2015-2016 Election of Board Members will take place at our Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 16th



Monica Wooton has served on the MHS Board since it began in 2001. She is a founding member. She was also the Project Manager, Editor, Writer and Photographer for the award-winning Magnolia History Books: *Magnolia: Memories & Milestones*, *Magnolia: Making More Memories*. She will serve as Interim President and continue leading the free Memoir Writing Workshops.

Mimi Sheridan is a Magnolian and local historian. She has a degree in history and political science from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a Master's degree in urban planning with a certificate in historic preservation from the University of Washington. Historic preservation is her specialty. She will serve at-large.



Dee St. George joined MHS as Grant Bookkeeper for *Magnolia: Making More Memories* in 2006. Since then she has served as Treasurer, Book Sales Coordinator, working on the MHS Newsletter, events and publicity. She will continue in these roles.



Kathy Cunningham is a long time Magnolia resident with a love of history. Retired from the Federal Government, her son, Jeffrey Cunningham—ex-MHS President got her interested in volunteering for MHS. She has been serving as Secretary and will continue that role.



Linda O'Neal has lived in Magnolia for over 20 years. She recently wanted to learn more about local history so joined the Board. She represents MHS at Magnolia/Queen Anne District Council. She will also handle book sales. Linda is also interested in genealogy and writing her memoirs.

Beth Winchell is volunteer with the Magnolia Historical Society. As a UW graduate student in business (MBA Program), she will be working with our Special Collections Photo Archive at the University indexing photos to make them available on line. Note: She is serving as a specialist volunteer.



Jeff Cunningham serves as MHS Facebook Administrator in charge of designs and updates which can be seen at www.facebook.com/magnoliahistoricalsociety

Bruce Jones retired from IBM and has served as our Webmaster since the beginning of our web presence. The website has been called impressive by many visitors. www.magnoliahistoricalsociety.org



MHS Seeking Board Members to continue doing what we do to make more Magnolia memories

Join this excellent Board which enjoys our mission of collecting, presenting, preserving the neighborhood history....and cookies and conversation while working together and making plans to do it!

- ▼ Interest in Magnolia's past and present ▼ Creative ideas encouraged
- ▼ Meet monthly (but not in the summer) ▼ No experience needed

**Questions or to Volunteer
Call (206) 284-2430**



FREE MEMOIR WRITING WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 30th

12:00-4:00pm

Magnolia Branch Public Library

2801-34th Avenue West

This popular workshop helps in getting down your memoirs and teaches memoir writing with prompts, tips, writing and gentle critiquing. You will find your voice in a safe place of encouragement working in small groups with published writers.



JOIN US!

Call (206) 284-2430 to RSVP

Space is limited.

The class fills up quickly.



MHS Accomplishments for 2014

- ◆ Newsletter, up-to-date website, and growing Facebook audience
- ◆ Free Memoir Writing Workshops
- ◆ Book sales throughout the year and at the Farmer's Market
- ◆ Completed work on MHS document archives at UW Special Collections
- ◆ Indexing and getting MHS photo archives online
- ◆ "Then and Now" articles for Magnolia News and Magnolia Voice
- ◆ Serves as active member of Magnolia/Queen Anne District Council
- ◆ Consulted with Army Reserve in creating marker for the historic cemetery
- ◆ Take individual queries and do research or send resources on Magnolia's history

Snapshot in Time: Magnolia - Fort Lawton and the Historic District Constant Controversy and Change

by Monica Wooton, MHS Board Member and
Mimi Sheridan, MHS Board Member

Then...

50 years ago – Just as the establishment of Fort Lawton took many years of tug-a-war among various interests and individual wills, so did the undoing of it when the property and buildings were surplused in the 1960's. This controversy pitted interests against each other about the creation of a Historic District. The proposal to preserve some of the original buildings and grounds was met with anguish by the Friends of Discovery Park and with joy by some city officials and citizens. This debate came on the heels of a long list of other debates regarding private and public interests wanting the land before and after it became Discovery Park.

The Friends became staunch and unwavering defenders of not allowing this park to become another Central or Stanley Park. They continually referred back to the Discovery Park Master Plan that prescribes that the park: "...should...provide... open space of quiet and tranquility...a sanctuary...[to] escape the turmoil of the City and enjoy the rejuvenation which quiet and solitude and an intimate contact with nature can bring."

In 1975, a proposed golf course in the Park was put to a city vote. The Friends made a compelling case against it and citizens agreed. Shortly afterwards, the City proposed that the original Army buildings be preserved in a historic district.

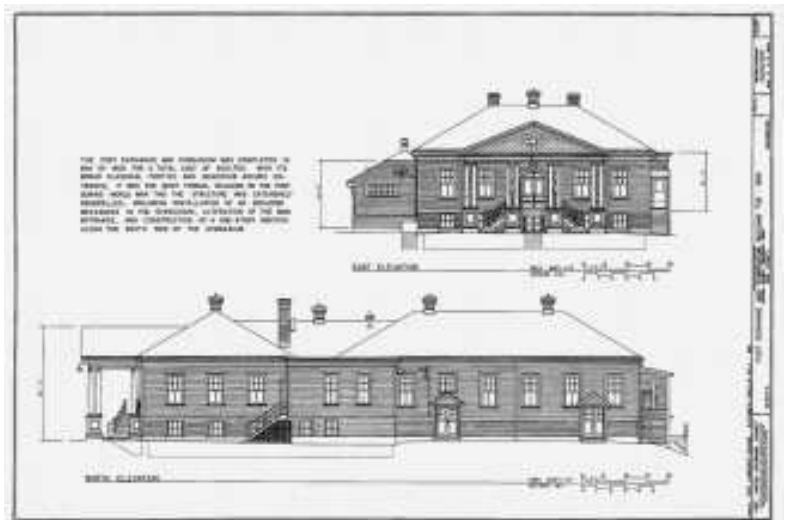
The Friends again contended that to keep and use historic buildings would be a breach of the Park's Master Plan. Many others wanted to preserve the buildings as a testament to its Colonial Revival architecture and the fort's place in history. Still, others saw the buildings as a resource for more park opportunities and re-use.

Activist Bob Kildall stated: "It would be very difficult to carry out the master plan if parts of the property are cut up as islands earmarked for other uses...and, if various buildings are used in such a way as to attract larger amounts of traffic into the Park." Some

disagreed. One proposal was for a low-income district for artists who could use the buildings as homes and studios.

There were more ideas, debates and rebuttals. On December 1, 1975, Herb Robinson on the editorial page of the *Seattle Times*, called it "the long running 'battle of Fort Lawton' an effort that began a decade ago." Robinson further expressed that the fight was not yet over.

Plans were proposed, studies for re-use were called for. Preservationists wanted to keep and use 24 buildings. In the meantime, one of the buildings proposed as an environmental learning center burned down under "possibly suspicious circumstances," according to the *Seattle Times* on May 15, 1983.



Drawings of two views of Fort Lawton Post Exchange and Gymnasium which was completed in 1905 at a total cost of \$20,700. This building, which still stands on the parade grounds, is on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic American Buildings Survey, Fort Lawton Recording Project, Page 12. 1981.

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Snapshot in Time: Fort Lawton/Historic District (continued from page 6)

The fight went on. On April 29, 1984 Robinson again weighed in: "...deciding what place, if any, the ancient Fort Lawton buildings have in the Park's future has been at an impasse for far too long. While the issue was simple enough, its resolution has been stymied by a variety of factors...government bureaucrats, historic preservationists and park purists...the prolonged pulling and tugging...is typical in the public policy arena these days...too cumbersome, too expensive and too vulnerable to political manipulation..."

But, there was more to the story. Federal law required that the Army consider impacts on historic buildings when turning over the property. In 1980, the city had signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) requiring it to "take any action required to prevent further deterioration" of the historic buildings and to enact an ordinance to manage the historic district. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation, with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, sued to enforce the agreement. In February 1988, the Federal District Court halted demolition, finding that "irreparable harm would occur if demolition of the historic buildings proceeded and the MOA remained unfulfilled. (*Washington Trust for Historic Preservation v. City of Seattle*, No. C87-1506C)

Council members continued to disagree. Councilmember Jim Street argued to save 6 buildings, without uses, while Councilmember Delores Sibonga wanted just 2 saved; but, with uses. On June 14, 1988, the City Council finally voted; and, in the words of a *Times* article of June 14, 1988: "six historic military buildings surrounding the Fort Lawton parade grounds will stand as empty-silent memorials to the old Army base."

Now...

The historic buildings have been left to languish unused. The World War II chapel (added to the District in 2005) needs refurbishing, new paint and landscaping. The other buildings have peeling paint and need repairs. The recently surplused Officer's Row and Non-Commissioned Officer's houses are now also protected by local historic district status, the exteriors are being restored and will be sold to individual private owners, who will be in a homeowner's association bound by city historic guidelines.

On Thursday, April 16th, the Magnolia Historical Society will hold its Annual meeting with a presentation by historian and preservationist Mimi Sheridan on the history of the Fort and the Historic District. The meeting will be held at 7:00pm in the Fireside Room at Magnolia Lutheran Church (2414 31st Avenue West). THRIVE Communities will also speak about plans for the privatization, rehabilitation and restoration of Officer's Row and the Non-Commissioned Officer's houses in the Historic District. .



Spring Book Sale

These make great gifts!

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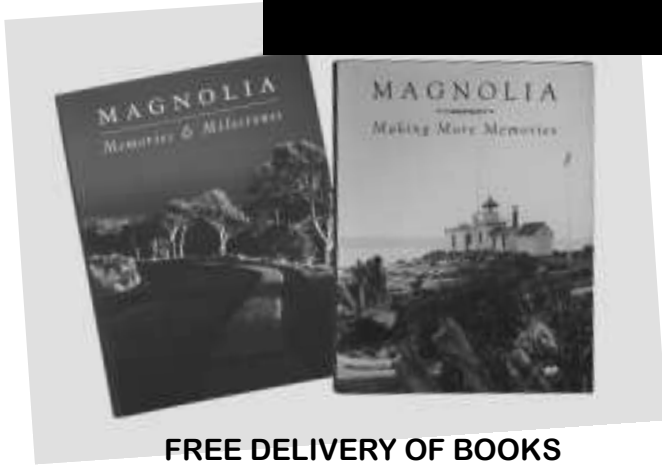
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www.magnoliahistoricalsociety.org
- ◆ Call (206) 284-5480

Please Note: The Magnolia Historical Society is willing to work with groups in using our books as a fundraiser. Contact us at the number above for details.



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**FREE
MEMOIR WRITING WORKSHOP!**
Saturday, May 30, 12-4PM, RSVP
See page 5 for details