

MUSEUM MEANDERINGS

A QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE LA CENTER MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

February 2013 Website <http://www.thelacentermuseum.org> B.G. Barnhart, Editor

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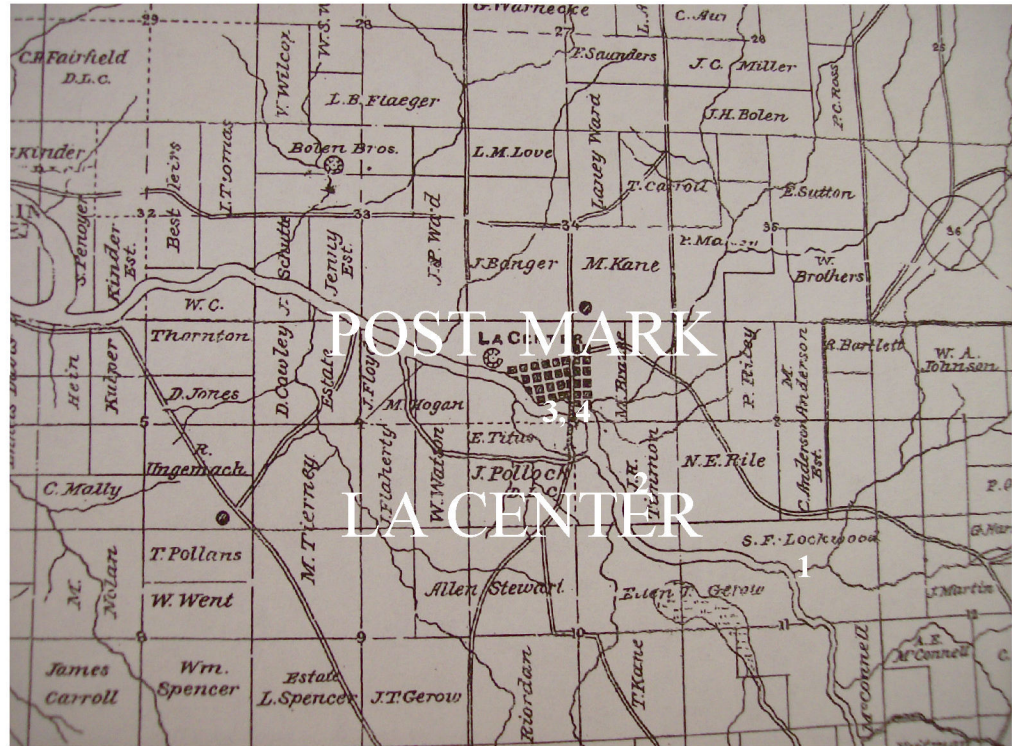
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"Post Mark: La Center" is a new exhibit highlighting the postal history of our city. The very first Post Office, Lincoln P.O. 1866-1870 was located at the mouth of Lockwood Creek along the East Fork of the Lewis River. (See 1 on the map.) The Stoughton Post Office Oct. 1873-Oct. 1874 was located further northwest on the East Fork of the Lewis River. (See 2 on the map.) The Lewis River Post Office March 1873-June 1874 (3 on the map) and August 1874-January 3, 1877 (see 4 on the map) were located along La Center's waterfront at the foot of Main Street. The Lewis River Post Office was renamed La Center on January 3, 1977.

First Post Masters in each of the the Post Offices in order were: Reuben T. Lockwood, Henry C. Comegys, Captain William G. Weir and John H. Timmen. Other historical names in the La Center Post Office and dates of appointment include John K. Gaither, 1-24-81; Thomas J. Carroll, 12-26-93; John K. Gaither, 5-23-97; Patrick M. Kane, 2-25-15; Ernest Anderson, 8-29-23; Edna Daly Smith, 7-31-36; Robert W. Beck, 11-1-51; Walter E. Soehl, 4-24-53.

LA CENTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

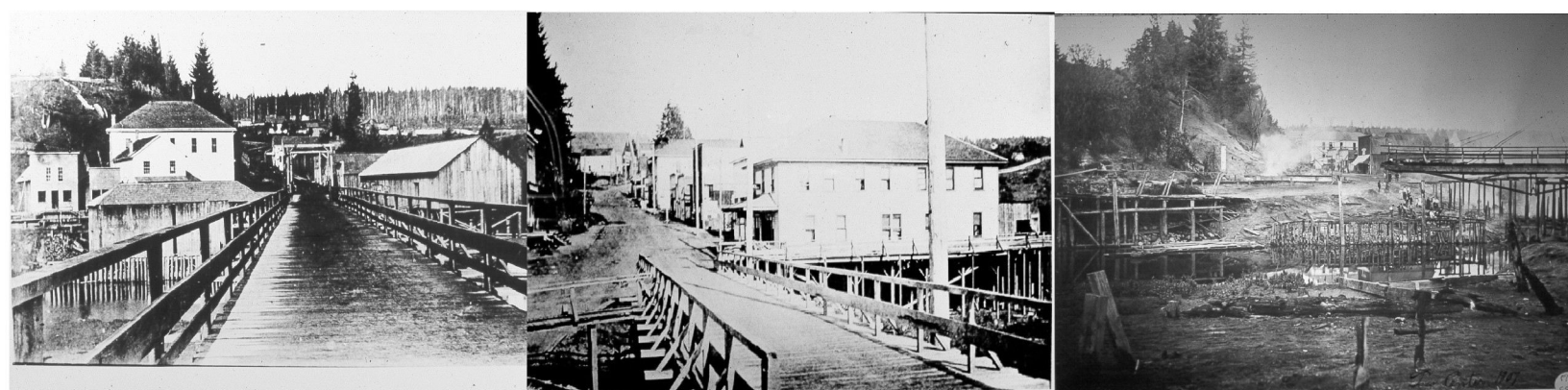
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More "Post Mark: La Center"...

From 1873 to 1907, the La Center Post Office had several locations up and down "Old Main Street" which ran in a north-south direction from the waterfront. The 1907 fire destroyed the La Center Post Office but the safe was not damaged. Burglars, inept in the use of explosives, tried to break into the safes of several businesses. The result was the loss by fire of the telephone office in the Kane Brothers Building, the Post Office, a saloon, barbershop, one store, one house and four riverside warehouses. The safes in the saloon and a warehouse were drilled into but were not further damaged. The safe in the Kane Brother's Building actually exploded. The thieves were never apprehended. Rather than rebuild on the water's edge most businesses moved to 5th Street (now 4th). The impetus to relocate to higher ground on the east- west "New Main Street" was also a response to the announcement that the Highway Board was going to put a highway right over the west side of "Old Main Street" as part of the California to Canada Pacific Highway 99.

The photos below show La Center's waterfront before and after the 1907 fire.



Beckie Anderson Parvin was about ten years of age when the Post Office on the south side of 5th Street (now 4th) burned to the ground on September 21, 1930. She wrote "This fire will always remain in my memory because it involved our family. You see, it was the Post Office and my father, Ernest Anderson, was postmaster at the time (from 1923 to '36.)" The fire started in Dr. Lasater's office which was on the second floor of the Post Office building. It spread to Tom Headley's Blacksmith Shop and continued eastward toward the Town Hall and on to the fire hose-cart building. Beckie relates that the hosecart was in use at the time and was saved. In her article "Story of a La Center Fire" published in Fort Vancouver Historical Society's 1975 edition of Clark County History Beckie credited the fire department in Vancouver for responding "to a call and came to aid with men and pumper and tanker trucks that pumped water out of the Lewis River just below the town. Ridgefield also sent a fire truck and men to help." The Post Office opened the next day in the long vacant Hobert Store Building just up the street across from the church. The P.O had two other moves: across the street to C&C Hair & Nails' present location and then to today's Post Office off Lockwood Creek Rd.



La Center's 1930 Fire

LOGGING MILLS IN LA CENTER

The following article contains excerpts from the original article written by Janice Fillman for the Lewis River News on June 13, 1990.

At the turn of the century Douglas fir, Western red cedar, and Hemlock trees were abundant in the Lewis River Valley. The vast forests and plentiful land were a golden opportunity for the early settlers. Most people were farmers and they were enticed by the promise of free land. Soon the timber industry was thriving in the area. This provided many jobs and before long merchants were setting up shop.

For some, fortunes were made as lumber barons. Others barely eked by. The mills provided employment for many men in the area. Others owned their own mills. When business was at its peak, one tie mill could turn out 50,000 feet of ties per day. The ties were purchased by the railroads for the northern and southern expansion lines. The North Fork Logging Company had a tie mill at Rock Creek in 1906. They would cut the ties and put the best logs in the river to be driven down to the Smith-McCoy boom at the mouth of the Lewis River. They were then rafted and towed to Portland mills.

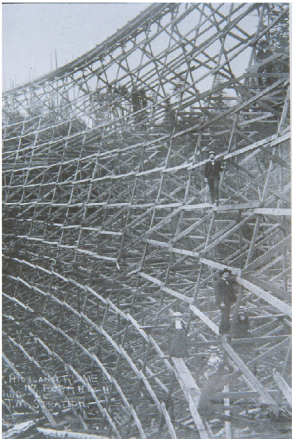


Oxen pulling logs along a skid road. burned in 1912 and was rebuilt with a spoon shaped bow.

The Speelyai remained in operation until 1940.

Olaf Aagaard was known as the lumber tycoon of the Highland area northeast of La Center, where he operated three mills. An early newspaper clipping from April 1895 reports the Highland mill had shipped a scow load of railroad ties and another was ready to go, but higher water was needed before the boat could leave La Center and head out of the East Fork to the Columbia River.

(Continued on next page.)



La Center Logging Photos

- ~ The Highland Flume was 117 ft. high. The men are identified as the Johnson Brothers.
- ~ Olaf Aagaard poses atop a stack of railroad ties.
- ~ The Steam Donkey in this Rashford photo was said to be the greatest labor saving device in logging history.

LOGGING MILLS IN LA CENTER, continued.

The Dayton Lumber Mill was also owned by Aagaard and was operating in 1907. He provided room and board for his employees. From an old ledger dated May 1907 were notations for food expenses. May 1 lists 155 pounds of beef at .075 cents a pound totaling \$11.62. May 7 three sacks of spuds at \$1.50 a bag totaling \$4.50. Loggers were charged by the week or month for room and board. Tobacco was also sold by the company. Daily wages ranged from \$2.00 to \$5.00 a day, but not everyone worked twenty days a month.

Early La Center Mayor, Nick Rashford eventually owned a piece of several mills that included mills in La Center, Woodland and probably the Daybreak areas. Other mills that were not as lucrative included the Gant Mill which washed out when a dam on the Lewis River broke in 1904. According to Ralph and Harry Sorenson, the Payette and Tie Mills were also called the Jenny Creek Mill. It was dubbed the "hardly able" mill because of equipment breakdowns. The Mixsteadt Mill off County Road 41 (now 41st Ave) and Graves Road was another hard luck mill with something always breaking down.

Although logging in the La Center area has decreased considerably, it created many jobs and supported the settlement of the area. Logging was a dangerous job and many suffered injuries. Some workers even lost their lives. It is good to reflect on the jobs these men did to bring us the lumber that was used to build many of the early homes and businesses in our area.

~ Article contributed by Candy Falk and Janet Wilson

LA CENTER MUSEUM ASSOCIATION BENEFACTORS

Thank you to the following Benefactors who donated gifts to the Museum Association in memory of friends and loved ones.

- * Tom Wooldridge - In Memory of Lee Wooldridge \$30
- * Don and Barbara Barnhart - In Memory of Janice K. Fillman \$50
- * Dr. William and Sandra Bennett - In Memory of Janice K. Fillman \$250
- * Carol Gluth Hills and Nick Gluth and the many family members and friends of Edna Marie Rashford Gluth - \$1,650



Special Notes:

Edna Marie Rashford Gluth (June 7, 1915 - Sept. 28, 2012) was the elder daughter of La Center's first Mayor Nicholas Rashford and his wife Anna Johanson Rashford. Many Rashford Family records, photos and mementos have been donated to the La Center Historical Museum.

Janice K. Fillman (Jan. 24, 1944 - Jan. 29, 2013) was Clerk Treasurer of the City of La Center. She was an avid writer, a talented artist and musician and she enjoyed historical and genealogical research. Janice was a Founding Member and Board Member of the La Center Museum Association

INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
LA CENTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM ~2013

Greetings to All Members and Past Members:

The Board of your Museum here in La Center invites you, first of all, to renew your membership for 2013. The funds derived are used to enhance the facilities and exhibits presented at the Museum. We also encourage you to invite friends, other family members or acquaintances who have interests in the history and culture of the La Center area to consider membership in the Museum.

*During the 2012 year we presented the following themed exhibits: *Local Native American Exhibits *Cowley Pioneer Family Exhibit *Grandma's Kitchen *Grandpa's Tools *Veteran's Day Remembrance 2012 and *Holiday Cards of the past.*

*2012 Special Events included: *Demonstrations on the Museum's Great Spinning Wheel by Barbara Sizemore and by Dolores Dougherty on a modern spinning wheel *A Butter Making Demonstration led by Board Member Jan Wilson and assisted by other Members *The Annual Ice Cream Social *A Guided Cemetery Walking Tour featuring early pioneer families who settled in the La Center area between 1850 & 1900 *A Holiday Open House with seasonal music provided by the La Center Middle School Choir and Christmas Tree decorations made by the First/Second Grade Class at La Center Elementary School.*

The year 2013 opened with Post Mark: La Center, WA featuring the history of our Post Office. Other exhibit plans for this year include a history of the camera "From Glass Slides to Digital Photos," another Pioneer Family in the Spotlight (TBA), and "The Bridges of La Center." If you have ideas or suggestions for future exhibits, please let us know.

We are open for public visitation on the first and third Saturdays of each month, from 12 noon until 4:00 p.m. and private appointments can be made as well. In closing, we warmly invite your renewed membership and visits to the La Center Historical Museum.

~ Ed Brannfors

Membership Committee Chair

LA CENTER MUSEUM ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

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