



THE BACKTRACKER



A Publication of Puget Sound Genealogical Society www.psgsociety.org Vol. 46: Issue 4 Oct-Dec 2021

Kitsap Antique Show—2021

It's a wrap!

It was a long time coming, because of COVID, but the 2021 Antique Show is in the books. Well, not quite in the books. We don't have a final profit until all the numbers are crunched, but it looks like our profit will be about \$3,000. We do know that a lot of you helped to make this show a success.

There were MANY changes along the way. First, we decided to move the show to September in hopes that we would be done with the COVID restrictions. Little did we know that it would be somewhat worse. Next, we were dealing with new staff at the Parks Department. They have tightened up on some of their policies, changing some policies and putting some new policies in place. It certainly caused some anxious moments for your chairperson (ME) and the committee. The really good news is that there was a great committee and we were able to pull it off.

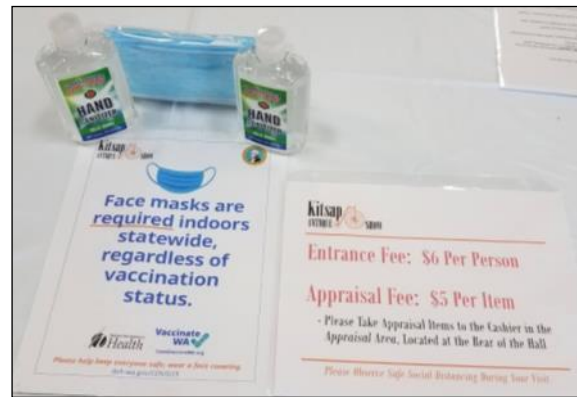
Thanks to so many of you for your hours of volunteer work. Just to let you know what a difference you make, we have one dealer who writes a gener-

ous check to the organization because of the show staff. That's you!

The show was about 9 dealers smaller than in previous years. We had several last-minute cancellations. We also lost our café vendor at the last minute.

Despite all of this, I heard lots of good comments from dealers. The customers seemed happy. It was a good show. THANK YOU!

Peg Powell



New Procedures for COVID

(More Show pictures on pages 5 and 11)

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Presidential Ponderings

by Jean Yager

I have to say I do miss our in-person contact. However, I'm getting spoiled with zoom. I like the fact I don't have to plan travel time (except from my kitchen to my office upstairs). I can wear my comfy clothes and slippers and no one would be the wiser (until now). I often wonder about those that don't turn their cameras on...what are they hiding?

All-in-all it appears others are also getting more comfortable "attending" zoom classes and monthly general meetings. We still get to socialize when I "open the doors" half hour before the class/program begins. It's also nice our speaker doesn't need to travel great distances (and it saves us money in travel expenses). If you haven't given zoom a try, you still have the opportunity to join us for the rest of Series III classes with Janet Camarata. See the complete schedule in the Looking Forward Section. Also, we have two more general meetings this year: Oct 27th and Nov 17th. Zoom links are emailed to members two days prior to the classes and programs.

If you were one of the ones who volunteered at the Antique Show, I want to THANK YOU so much for your help. This is our major fundraiser for our classes and programs. It would not happen without your support, so thank you!! I also want to thank the committee. This is a joint effort between PSGS and The Kitsap Historical Society & Museum: Peg Powell and Heidi Ginder (PSGS Co-

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Genealogy Center Report

by Elisabeth Demmon

The Genealogy Center remains closed due to the Delta Variant just as in-person meetings have been delayed until likely the New Year. If you are a Genealogy Center volunteer or plan to become one, please know that staff and patrons hope to see you soon, whenever that will be.

I continue to do "look-ups" ... just send me an email at edemmon@krl.org and I will do my best to help you get the information you need.

Sincerely, Elisabeth Demmon, KRL Liaison to PSGS

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Presidential Ponderings

by Jean Yager

(Cont'd from page 2)

Chairs), Larry Harden (responsible for counting the money), Rachele Peel (organizer of the volunteers), Rich and Jeanny Peel (deal with the dealers), Vickie Barrier (keeps the website updated), Jeff Coughlin (KHS&M Co-Chair and gets the word out), Bonnie Chrey and Ruth Reese (responsible for lining up the Appraisers). This show takes a lot of planning with the committee meeting regularly throughout the year. This year, especially, has been extremely challenging with all the restrictions they faced, but they were able to pull off another great show. I am amazed and so very thankful!

Another committee I want to thank is the Nomination Committee, Mahala Henry took on the role of chairperson and with the help of Jean Bray and Alta Drane they “pounded the pavement” making phone calls and sending out emails asking members if they would like to take on the responsibility of being a

PSGS officer. All their time and effort did not produce an encouraging outcome, partly because of the Covid issue, some were not ready to make such a commitment, which is totally understandable. So, with that being said (and knowing that nominations “from the floor” are still being accepted until we vote at the October General meeting), the following have agreed to be nominated for 2022: President: Jean Yager; 1st Vice President: Heidi Ginder; 2nd Vice President: Terry Mettling; Secretary: Jean Bray; Treasurer: Larry Harden and Member-At-Large: Lisa Treiberg. Thank you Mahala, Jean and Alta!!

Another crazy year is about to come to an end. I do not know what the future holds (my crystal ball finally broke), but we have managed to carry on in a different way, and if that rolls into 2022, well, I guess we will just have to go with the flow. Hang in there and let's stay connected!

PSGS Membership News

By Terry Mettling

As your 2nd Vice President in charge of membership, I would like to take a moment to state that I sincerely hope that we never have to go through something like this again. It has taken its toll on our society and our people and here's hoping that this next year sees somewhat of a return to normal, or at least the new normal. For 2021, the executive board suspended all dues so that those who were members in 2020 continued through 2021 at no charge. Basically, all current memberships were extended for one year. We will start collecting dues for 2022 in the near future and hope that the GC and the meeting room will open early in the New Year. You can find the mem-

bership form in this newsletter on page 7 or download it from our website. It should be mailed to the library at the address shown on the form. I would also like to remind everyone that if you are a member of a committee or a volunteer for the GC, you MUST be a member in good standing. Thank you and here's to a better 2022!



Cousin Jolly's Miracle Gift to Me

By Polly Langworthy

In 1972, while prepping my Portland home to move to Seattle/Kirkland, my dear Aunt Alice Rodenbough Brown Andre passed away. I attended her funeral and my Cousin Jolly, not seen since childhood, approached me resembling “Baby Jane,” so I was amazed when she offered me a copy of her family genealogy! I replied, how kind to offer her research to me. She said it was all messy pencil work on school paper, so I promised to type it since she was entrusting me with such a wonderful gift! She mailed me her large bundle, all hand-written long before home computers existed.

I typed Jolly's precious work and made copies for our cousins while I job shopped the old way (mail/wait/see) and gifted this family history to all as a 1972 Christmas Gift, tied with red ribbon from my sewing box. Sadly, I never heard from any relatives after sharing this treasure, and never saw Jolly again, but later learned that her 2-story log home burned to the ground while she was away. She lost all her work and her husband barely escaped with his life! So this became the miracle I was given; and I gladly saved her extensive Family Records in my keeping! I was so grateful for the rest of the story, and returned more copies to her.

Our moms were sisters and Jolly provided the basic family names and details of their lives, with some spouses and children also. The sisters' parents were: Olive Van Dodge, who wed William Herbert Rodenbough. My mom (b.1914) was the 6th child, and Jolly's mom was the 5th (b.1911). These were my Maternal Grandparents! Jolly's work began with four surnames: Dodge, Rodenbough, Dilley, and Axtell, and I

just typed everything provided and cleaned up what info I could on the families and added details for each of the four families. Jolly and I wrote letters that crossed in the mail but never spoke ever again. My life went on in Kirkland, and I raised my children alone, worked in Aerospace and UW, and finally moved to Kitsap in 2002.

I hadn't looked at family records for so long but still had the original 1972 Treasures Jolly shared, and knew some of my father's research on his Bohemian/French lines. By 1992, I also had started annual Christmas Letters to reach out to any remaining family contacts, seeking any links and information to share and exchange. My parents passed away in 1999 and 2002 and I had no one else to ask questions of.

About 2007, I saw the Port Orchard Genealogy sign, and went to investigate. A PSGS member (Madge Norton, bless her) said some members had Ancestry membership so she checked names I provided and began with my father's Bohemian line, and up popped many wonderful photos of my paternal grandmother and family—that my dad was never provided. They had been posted miraculously just two weeks prior, by my dad's mom's sister's family in Oklahoma. We also corresponded later! I magically learned of more cousins as I continued sending Christmas Letters and found names of my mother's father's sister's family. I wrote them and they sent old photos of youthful girls from long ago, who grew into my mom's eldest sisters, and even a photo of my mom's dad, holding her younger sister, about 1920. I even spied where my wavy stubborn hairline originated

(Cont'd on page 5)

Cousin Jolly's Miracle Gift to Me

By Polly Langworthy (Cont'd from page 4)

when I saw a young (MGM) Olive Van Dodge. Having never had any relatives while growing up, they popped into my life in a few photos. I saw life styles, like soap making day with large kettles all full of soap to last all year.

By 2008, I was hooked on Genealogy Chapter meetings, and in 2009, I became a DAR member in Elizabeth Ellington's Bremerton Chapter. The research became massive and has not stopped since! In 2014, I went to Salt Lake City, Utah to the Family History Library and lived in the archives long hours daily, where my vast history spilled out before me! I discovered enormously brave ancestors, royalty, poverty, and patriots. That began my dedication to extract a page of information for every ancestor who served in some military capacity in our rich country. Some did not want to provide info and all have passed away so no more time left.

I found my Dodge Line back to 1200 England once I started research, then dug deep at the Family

History Library for facts, discovering war services over and over, in amazing stories. My Rodenbough line came from Germany in the early 1700s, starting in New Jersey. This line also brought my Dilley and Axtell lines together in one Rodenbough bride, wed to care for tiny children of the first Rodenbough bride, who died in childbirth. Amazing facts have surfaced, left and right, with heart-breaking bravery in generation after generation ever since. My goal is to share more fantastic and true stories in future Backtracker editions.

I am grateful for the rich heritage and blessings received and will continue to expand my work. The importance here is my encouragement for all readers to reach out to possible contacts who may be able to share vital info and sometimes keepsakes for each family history while there is still time. You may be blessed in doing so! Best wishes on your Research journey.

2021 Antique Show



Roosevelt Smith appraises an item for a customer



Jeanne Nagasawa and Lori Sommerhiser ready to collect money from appraisal customers



Elisabeth shows silverware to a customer



Looking Forward...

to the next two months of programs presented by PSGS

October 27, 2021 The Witches of Salem with Jerri McCoy

There are no witches – are there? Of course not! But in 1692, in Salem, the witch hunt would swell and burn. How were witches identified? What happened to the accused? And who were those who were executed that terrible year in Salem? Come learn a little bit about them and their accusing neighbors.

November 17, 2021 TBD

Schedule of Classes — October—November 2021

Sat, Oct 30 Social History; Church Records

Presenter: Janet O'Connor Camarata

Sat, Nov 6 What to Do With What We Have

Presenter: Janet O'Connor Camarata

Sat, Nov 20 Writing Your Results; Sharing Success Stories and/or Questions and Answers

Presenter: Janet O'Connor Camarata

All classes are held via Zoom from 10 A.M. to 12 P.M.

Class Invite/Link is sent out two days before class. Doors open at 9:30 A.M.

No registration is required



Janet O'Connor Camarata

ROOTS TECH 2022

Exciting update...The 2022 Roots Tech event will be entirely virtual and free. The dates are March 3-5, 2022. Registration is now open. Log into RootsTech.org and click on subscribe for updates.

Puget Sound Genealogical Society Membership Form 2022

Membership Year January 1 through December 31

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Type of Membership

_____ New Member (I have never been a member of PSGS).

_____ Renewing Member (I am currently a member of PSGS. Renewals are due January 1).

_____ Returning Member (I used to be member of PSGS but let my membership lapse).

Individual: _____ **\$15.00** **Joint:** _____ **\$20.00**

Mail completed form with check or money order to:
PSGS Membership, Genealogy Center, Kitsap Regional Library,
1301 Sylvan Way, Bremerton, WA, 98310

.....
I would like to make an additional donation of \$_____ to PSGS. signed: _____

(PSGS is a 501(c)(3) "Tax Exempt" organization) Your support is appreciated.

PSGS depends on volunteer support from its members in order to offer a wide variety of genealogical services to its members.

Please consider volunteering your time by checking one or more of the following activities.

- _____ Antique Show
- _____ The Backtracker Newsletter
- _____ Cemetery Project
- _____ Class Assistants
- _____ Education Committee
- _____ Genealogy Center Volunteers

- _____ Historical School Records Project
- _____ Program Committee
- _____ Seminar Committee
- _____ Website Committee
- _____ Website Construction

(Office Use Only)

Payment Received: Cash _____ Check # _____ Date _____ (Revised Sept 2021)

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Who Was the Man Called “John Erland Ahlquist” and Who Was “Grandpa Oh”? A Mystery By Melody Knight

I thought my loving step-grandpa’s name was John (or Johan) Erland Ahlquist with the nickname “Oh” until I was in my 60s! But I was wrong. I was visiting his daughter, Gert Wickett in North Bend, Oregon. She was about 90 and bed-ridden but her mind was sharp! She told me several stories.

Gert’s father was a result of his mother’s rape. The rapist, a fellow farm worker, was from the Karelian area of Finland. The farm owner took her into his home. John was born about 1887. Gert’s grandmother never told her son the name of his real father so we may never be able to trace him. My step-grandpa told us his mother was Swedish and his father was Karelian. Karelia is an area wedged between Finland and Russia whose borders changed as wars were fought over it.

When Gert’s father reached adulthood he left his little hamlet. He had heard that there were many opportunities for work in America. So at 16 he started his journey.

The port city of Hamina, Finland, was a pretty wild place for a young adult—especially at night! I imagine it was much like the westerns depict the early 1900s in the U.S. One evening “Oh” was alone and saw a man being roughed up and “rolled” by two men. He hid until they were gone, then went to check on the man. The man was dead so John looked for identification. He found papers that said he was John Erland Ahlquist. Since “Oh” didn’t even have a birth certificate and had been trying to get a passport and other papers needed for emigration, he decided to take Johan’s. From that day on he was John Erland Ahlquist. Ahlquist was fitting since it is a Swedish name!

So “Oh” newly renamed, John Erland Ahlquist, entered America in 1902. He worked in several areas

until he found other Finnish people working in Michigan doing whatever work they could find. He was working in Calumet, Michigan as a miner when he married Aina Tuominen on August 27, 1910. They did whatever they could to make a living, he as a copper or coal miner and she as a domestic.

John was working in Butte, Montana in the coal mines when the 1918 Spanish Flu hit. Gert said the flu was devastating. Their neighbors, the Rakinens, were under quarantine so John risked his life to check on them and see what he could do. He made “mush” or oatmeal for them and fed them for several days. Four people in the family died. He said the bodies were “stacked like cord wood!”

John left Butte and traveled by train to Aberdeen, Washington, where he had found work in a paper mill. Gert and Aina followed. I think either Aina died or they divorced sometime after.

Helmi Katariina (Toivola) Asikainen moved into John’s home as a housekeeper, with her son, Arne. In the 1940 census Helmi is listed as his wife, and Lila as their daughter.

My father, Arne, John’s step-son, remembers when a cross was burned in the yard of their home on Schley Street. He said it was because the other immigrants from Norway, Sweden and other countries were threatened by the newer arrivals—since they were all trying to get the same few jobs. I think there was something even more serious at work there at that time!

Gert was an honor student in high school when her older boyfriend, Wallace Wickett, talked her into going to get married rather than going to school that day. When she finally contacted John a couple of

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A Mystery By Melody Knight *(Cont'd from page 9)*

days later she said he was really upset and that it was the first time she had ever seen him angry!

I loved the only grandpa I knew well—the one that I could see anytime I wanted because we lived in the same town. Even if we didn't share DNA and we were only related by marriage, he was very special to me.

My love for "Oh" resulted in writing a story about him as the kindest person I knew as an assignment in High School! He never raised his voice. He never said anything bad about anyone. He let me eat anything I wanted fresh out of his big, beautiful, well-kept garden. I still have memories of him pushing his wheelbarrow and taking care of his garden.

I had been told that my grandmother, Helmi (meaning "Pearl" in Finnish), did not want to be called grandma or "Mumu" (the Finnish equivalent). She wanted to be called "Mun" and we don't know what it meant. One day Mun was holding me and sitting on the swing John had made for them, which hung from a tree in the middle of the yard. When it broke she and I toppled to the ground. I think she was hurt in the fall. He was so angry that he chopped off the limb of the tree that held the swing and later chopped down the whole tree.

At some point John became involved with union business. Gert said that she was aware that he was involved with that when they were in Butte, Montana. She said she worried about him because it was a dangerous thing to do in those years, and that he worked about 14 hours a day (possibly a 10-12 hour day with meetings after). Part of John's job was making sure that nobody in the crowd had weapons. Some owners and supervisors of mines, logging camps, sawmills, or of other businesses would try to make more profit by cutting corners--giving people terrible accommodations, little food (sometimes with little nutrition), insufficient pay, and having them work very long days. Sometimes they didn't even have days off. Sometimes

the roofs of buildings, where they lived or slept, leaked. Some logging camps, at that time, only had huge, room-sized wooden platforms to sleep on. Dozens of men had to sleep shoulder to shoulder—often with no way to heat the buildings. Imagine trying to sleep in those conditions while other people snored, coughed or passed gas all night! Sometimes the work was more dangerous because of machines or tools that weren't maintained or were sub-standard to begin with.

Arne and "Oh" were partners in the woods as loggers. At that time the trees were "old growth"--meaning that they were "virgin" trees that had never been cut before! They would cut a wedge on both sides of the tree so that a piece of wood could be put in for each of the loggers to stand on. They would take a huge crosscut saw and cut down the tree. The diameter of the trees would be more than the almost 6 ft. measurement of John or Arne! It was dangerous work but they were good at it.

According to my dad, "Oh" was one of the strongest men on the waterfront! Arne and John also worked as longshoreman loading ships with different kinds of cargo. They worked in places like Astoria and Portland, Oregon, and Aberdeen and Raymond, Washington. It was back-breaking work and they worked long hours. John was also a shoemaker, he probably repaired shoes on the side. Helmi and "Oh" also worked as camp cooks in their later years.

When I was searching online for information about John I happened on a site I had never seen before. It started loading my computer with tons of material that was adding up in volume and dollar value. I didn't know I had to pay for copies of the information I was searching for. There were notices saying, "Did you know that John was a criminal?" or "Did you know that John had been involved with criminal activity?" No! I didn't want to see this—not my grandpa "Oh"! And I certainly

(Cont'd on page 11)

A Mystery By Melody Knight (Cont'd from page 10)

didn't want to pay for finding out all of those things if they were even true! I quickly clicked out of the site!

I expect now that he had been arrested many times for union-organizing, marching in protest, or some other activity that some other people objected to. It may even have been part of Wobbly, IWW, or other organizations that had incidents in places like Centralia, Washington. He may have been part of that movement which was trying to get better wages and conditions for

workers which was sometimes referred to as "Communist Activity" at that time. Many famous people joined these movements, such as Helen Keller!

So I say again, "Who was my grandpa" and "Who was John Erland Ahlquist?" There are mysteries here that I may or may not be able to solve, but he remains my beloved grandpa "Oh"!

2021 Antique Show

Rachelle Peel, Peg Powell and Heidi Ginder watch over the show and help where ever needed



Margaret Howard and Juahela Baer greet antique hunters



The Center Aisle entices shoppers to find that special treasure



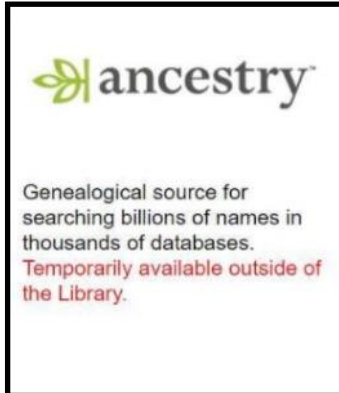
Best Friends Antiques

DID YOU KNOW?

ProQuest will be able to continue to provide public libraries with temporary remote access to *Ancestry Library Edition* through **December 31, 2021**.

Go to: <https://www.krl.org/research>

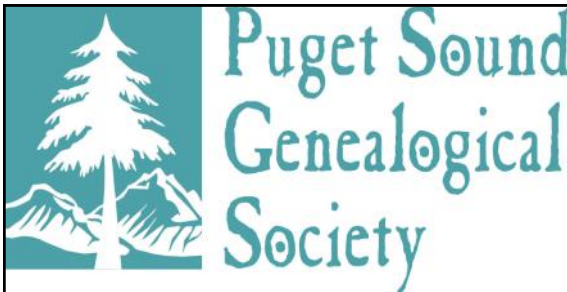
And click on the following icon...



PSGS NEEDS YOU!

PSGS will hold elections for new 2022 officers at our next General Meeting on October 27, 2021. The meeting begins at 1:00 P.M. with a short program by Jerri McCoy. Please see the Presidential Ponderings section for the slate of nominees. Nominations can also be made from the floor (or the computer screen since the meeting and program will be on zoom). Look for the zoom link to be sent in an email blast a couple of days before the meeting or on Facebook or the Website.

Your presence is needed for this important vote to continue PSGS as we know it. A quorum of 25 members is needed to hold the election. Thank you for your support!



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