



WHITMAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 52, No. 1 – January/February 2025

WCHS Holiday Highlights



Left: Elves from the Pullman Civic Trust transformed the Caboose at the Depot from a pumpkin wall to a Christmas tree.



The Annual Christmas Open House at the Perkins' House on December 7 featured a vintage fashion show (left) and holiday music by Oakesdale harpist **Hannah Strong** (right).



The Depot by the Numbers by Debbie Sherman

The Pullman Depot Heritage Center has finalized donation numbers for 2024. According to Steering Committee chair **Linda Hackbarth**, 137 donors have gifted \$305,893 to the Depot in the past year, with \$67,003 being earmarked for rail car restoration.

Building funds will support a new electrical and HVAC system, incorporating a new air flow system that will eliminate the old ductwork and thus preserve historic interior ceiling lines. The past year has seen completion of the gutters and soffits, and the refurbishing and restoration of the window frames, along with the addition of a new security system.



Exterior restoration of the passenger car and caboose is a priority for 2025, the need for which can be seen in the photo at left. More than \$67,000 of the total raised to date has been earmarked for the two train cars. Additional pledges will add \$18,000. On completion of the work, a replica of the original “Cougar Special” platform—which will be fabricated by the McGregor Company—will be added.

February Palouse People: “Jennie Norton Bunker, Survivor of the ‘Norton Massacre’ ”

Presented by **Kathy Meyer**
Pullman Depot Freight Room (330 N. Grand Ave.)

Jennie Bunker, who—with her second husband Thomas Bunker—built a house in Pullman in 1892, is generally referred to as “a survivor of the Nez Perce War”—but she was really only involved in one incident. In mid-June of 1877, she had been shot through both legs during a two-day confrontation with Nez Perce (Niimiipuu) warriors while attempting to evacuate from Cottonwood House (now Cottonwood, Idaho). Crippled as a result, she was later interviewed repeatedly and she herself wrote extensively about her experience—until her death in 1928. Come learn about her story on Thursday, February 27, at 7:00 PM!



Above: Jennie and her son Hill



PDHC Quilt Show Coming Up!

Although it’s clearly Winter, Spring will be here before we know it—which means that the Annual Pullman Depot Vintage Quilt Show, in April, is just around the corner! If you own an antique quilt or two (or more) that you would be willing to loan to the Depot for the quilt show, contact **Jamie Whitman** at 509-332-1005 or jwhitman97@yahoo.com.



Jill Gfeller of Thornton started volunteering at the Perkins House in Colfax five years ago. She was inspired to do so by a program presented by other Perkins House volunteers at a meeting of the Athenaeum Club. She now serves as a docent at the house, is working hard on its landscaping, and is the museum's outreach coordinator (in charge of recruiting additional volunteers).



While leading tours of the house, Jill dresses in striking reproduction period clothing that she herself has made. "I've lost track of how many outfits I have," she admits. WCHS director **Val Gregory** says that Jill "always goes above and beyond to make the Perkins House a great place to visit."

Jill grew in Graham, Washington, and graduated from Eatonville High School. She then went to Washington State University, where she double majored in Agricultural Communications and Dance. In fact, she was the first to graduate in Ag. Com. and helped design the program. At WSU she also met her husband Steve, another Ag. major. The couple has three sons and eight grandchildren.

When asked why she devotes so much of her time to the Perkins House, Jill said, "I love history, and I love to dress up!"



FEATURED MUSEUM: THE TAUFEN SCHOOLHOUSE

102 J. Meyer Rd., Uniontown WA

The restored Taufen Schoolhouse (#134), a privately owned museum in southern Whitman County, is primarily the work of Barb Meyer, her late husband John, and their granddaughter Savannah Chadwick, although a number family members and hired men helped as well.

It was built in 1892 on land donated by Theordore Heitstuman, for whom it was originally named. By the time it closed in 1936, however, the name had been changed to Taufen Schoolhouse, to honor Lambert Taufen and his family, who were very active supporters of the school.

The building, which measures 20 by 30 feet, sat empty for several years. In 1949, John's father, Hubert "Shup" Meyer, moved it approximately 150 yards to its present location in order to make room to build a new house. It then served as small shop and as a shed for combine headers.

Beginning in 2012, Barb and Savannah spent four years researching, repairing, and furnishing the school, which they restored as closely as possible to its original appearance. The two sifted through old records, interviewed former students, and collected original items from the school—

as well as artifacts from other one-room schools in the area. It opened in September of 2014, although the interior was not completely finished for another two years.

To schedule a tour of the Taufen Schoolhouse, contact Barb at: barb.babinski@gmail.com. Please note that it is closed from Oct 31 until April 1 because there is no heat in the building. The schoolhouse is free to the public but welcomes donations, which go to the Taufen Schoolhouse Scholarship Fund, awarded to a graduating Colton High School senior each year.



Interior of the school, circa 1930

If you have information for the March/April newsletter, please call either **Debbie Sherman** (509) 334-7389 or **Kathy Meyer** (509) 432-1336, or email them at jdjsherman@msn.com or klemeyer@gmail.com. We can't print your stories unless you contact us!

2025 Calendar

Jan. 15	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Pullman Archive
Feb. 19	WCHS Executive/Depot Meeting, 6:00 PM, Pullman Depot
	WCHS Board Meeting, Trust Report, 7:00 PM, Pullman Depot
Feb. 27	Palouse People: "Jennie Norton Bunker: Survivor of the 'Norton Massacre,' "
	by Kathy Meyer, 7:00 PM, Pullman Depot Freight Room
Mar. 19	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Perkins House, Colfax
Apr. TBA	PDHC Vintage Quilt Show
Apr. 16	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Print Museum, Palouse
May TBA	Palouse Prairie Tea Party, PDHC
May 21	WCHS Executive/Depot Meeting, 6:00 PM, Pullman Depot
	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Pullman Depot
May, TBA	Palouse People, "Fallen Cougars," by WSU History graduate students, 7:00 PM.
	PDHC Freight Room.
June 18	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM Pullman Archive
July 11-12	Old Mill Days, Oakesdale
July 16	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Perkins House, Colfax
Aug. 15-16	Pullman Lentil Festival
	PDHC Depot Days, Pullman
Aug. 20	WCHS Executive/Depot Meeting 6:00 PM, Pullman Depot
	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00, Pullman Depot
Sept. 4-7	Palouse Empire Fair – come see us at the Jones Schoolhouse and the
	Blacksmith Shop
Sept. 18	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Print Museum, Palouse
Oct. TBA	WCHS Annual Meeting, time and place TBA
Nov. 20	WCHS Executive/Depot Meeting 6:00 PM, Pullman Depot
	WCHS Board Meeting, 7:00 PM, Pullman Depot
Dec. 7	Perkins House Christmas, Colfax
Dec. 7, 14, 21	Train Car Bazaar at the Pullman Depot
Dec. 18	WCHS Board Meeting, Zoom

Please Renew Your Membership! If you haven't done so already, please respond to the membership renewal request you may have recently received in the mail. Membership would be a wonderful way to start the New Year! The form can be found below, or you can renew your membership or buy one as a gift on the WCHS website (whitmancountyhistoricalsociety.org). Thank you!

MEMBERSHIP: Become a part of the exciting future of Whitman County, or share its history with a friend or relative! Join, renew your membership, or give a gift membership.

- | | | | |
|--|--------|---|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership | - \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Membership. | - \$ 75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership | - \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron Membership | - \$100 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Membership. | - \$60 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership | - \$500 or more |

Name of continuing or new member, or gift recipient:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Name of giver, if applicable: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

I'd like to make an additional donation: \$25.00 \$50.00 \$100.00 other \$ _____

Please direct my donation to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greatest Need | <input type="checkbox"/> Roy Chatters Newspaper and Printing Museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holy Trinity Chapel | <input type="checkbox"/> Pullman Depot Heritage Center |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Perkins House and Cabin | <input type="checkbox"/> WCHS Archive |

Note that WCHS is a 501c 3. Your gift is tax deductible. Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Send to: WCHS Membership Chairman PO Box 67 COLFAX WA 99111