# Jefferson County, Washington

## **GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

#### Volume 28, Issue 3

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# STRALOGICAL SOCIO

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## New Members

## WELCOME!

Dick Osburn

Sharon Sofie

K. Austin Kerr

Jane R. Montgomery

Barbara J. Rainwater

Shirley & Michael Berg

Jackie Rick

Naomi Mitchell

# BREAKING THROUGH BRICK WALLS

By Bev Brice

We call them Brick Walls or say that the stork brought great-great-grandpa John. Or maybe he hatched behind a rock or was dropped down by aliens, but in any case we simply are stuck and can't find out about his family. Being addicted to this genealogical pursuit, we are not inclined to give up. After hitting our head against that wall so many times, however, the frustration level mounts and we can't see the forest for the trees. What to do?

First, be positive! Each ancestor did have parents and a family, it's only that you haven't yet looked at it from all angles. Maybe you need a break. Set it all aside for 6 months and work on a family where you can be successful. When you are ready to start again, put on your detective hat. This is the challenging and fun part of our research. You are no longer just searching for surnames, but you are researching all available sources of information. This requires that you THINK about the problem.

Begin by putting a clear and concise statement of what you want to know on paper. Next list everything that you already know and the source of that information. It is important to note the source so you can evaluate the accuracy of the information. Now you are ready to begin. Go back through that list and challenge every source and assumption to see if it holds water. Is the timeline consistent or do you have him marrying at age 9? Are you basing a possible birth date solely on that stated in his death record, which is a suspect source of information?

Having reviewed all the information, come up with a theory to answer your question. This possibility needs to be specific and something that could be proved by records you may find. We really have to throw out the alien theory at this point. Test out your new option and be prepared to reject it if it doesn't work. Being open minded about your answer goes a long way to finding the solution. Put yourself in your ancestor's shoes and observe his life. What records would he have created?

Is this beginning to sound like a lot of work? Well, it is but think of the reward of that adrenalin rush when you figure it out! You may need to learn how to research a new state or time period. The records, laws, and expected behaviors change from researching Massachusetts in 1650 as opposed to 1899. You may find yourself

(Continued on page 3)

# FROM THE PRESIDENT'S SOAPBOX

By Marge Samuelson and Paula McNees

In June *Paula McNees* and myself were elected co-presidents. We will be working together for much of the coming year until Paula is ready to take the reins alone. We've been discussing goals for our term together and have decided to focus on member outreach. We know there are many among you whose talents could be well used and much appreciated by the Society. We are actively seeking volunteers to staff the Research Center and work on special projects at the Center. We need to replace Paula as board Treasurer and would like to add a Membership Outreach Coordinator to work with our membership committee, and a Volunteer Coordinator to schedule volunteer coverage at the Research Center. We encourage all of you to become active members and consider what JCGS can do for you!

We would like to thank Jesse Stewart and Eunice Franklin for all of their years of service to our organization and welcome new Recording Secretary Bill Conklin.

Fall is coming on quickly and the Jefferson County Genealogical Society has lots of plans for 2013. This will be our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the Education Committee is working to plan a special program for our Spring Seminar. We are sure they would appreciate any suggestions from our members.

**In November we are planning another Brick Wall Solutions meeting.** Feel free to turn your "dead ends" over to JCGS, P. O. Box 627, Port Townsend, WA, use the form on the website wajcgs.org or drop it off at the Center. This is a fun meeting and we always learn something new.

We look forward to working with all of you in the coming months.

## Treasurer's Report

As of July 31 we had \$13,572 in cash and CDs and our endowment held by the Seattle Foundation was worth \$100,527. The Society's current total assets including furniture, equipment and books stands at \$159,481.

# JEFFERSON COUNTY RESEARCH

Have you looked recently at the indexes posted on our website, www.wajcgs.org? We have updated the Obituary Index, Fort Flagler Families, and the Library Catalog and have added the following indexes: Funeral Home Records Marriage Records 1855-1933 Quilcene Heritage: Looking Back Land Abstract Files 1850-1954 Surname Files

# BREAKING THROUGH BRICK WALLS (CONT.)

#### (Continued from page 1)

using new types of records like land, court, or fraternal organizations. This takes time to figure out what you are seeing. Look for classes through JCGS or online to answer your questions.

And for heavens sake, don't take this problem on alone. Ask for help! First, have a friend look over what you put together, they may see something you have missed. Ask for help from others who are researching in the same locations or on the same families. Message Boards are a good way to get the word out if you don't want to use mailing lists or Facebook. Rootsweb, Genforum, or Ancestry are good places to begin. Don't just look for what others have put on their family tree, but ask them where they got the information. Discuss cemeteries in an area with those who live there, and might go and take a picture for you. Learn that one published genealogy for a county is known to be unreliable while another one is well documented. Only someone with local knowledge can help you there.

And another resource is available to you. The JCGS monthly program in November is devoted to looking at the Brick Wall problems of our members. The Education Committee will be that new set of eyes for you. Submit your problem and we will review the situation and see if we can come up with an answer. We ask that you fill out a form so we have the relevant information. This is available on our website www.wajcgs.org or at the Research Center. We look forward to looking over your shoulder.

And here's a success story from Pat Stromberg who submitted a request for help last year.

What happened to Cornelius Wyncoop Dewitt?

This is the information submitted: MY GREAT, GREAT GRANDFATHER, CORNELIUS DEWITT, MARRIED CHARITY VAN GAASBEEK IN 1838. THE COUPLE HAD FOUR CHILDREN AND LIVED TOGETHER IN MILFORD PA. UNTIL SOME-TIME AFTER THE 1850 CENSUS.

AFTER 1850 IT IS NOT CLEAR IF CORNELIUS DIVORCED OR SEPARATED FROM CHARITY; BUT BY THE 1860 CEN-SUS HE WAS APPARENTLY STILL LIVING IN MILFORD, PA AND CHARITY WAS LIVING IN NY WITH HER PARENTS AND CHILDREN. IN THE 1870 CENSUS CORNELIUS IS LIVING ALONE AS A MERCHANT (JUNK DEALER) IN ALEXAN-DRIA WITH A SERVANT OR HOUSEKEEPER.

I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHY HE SEPARATED FROM HIS FAMILY AFTER 1850. I HAVE HIS DEATH DATE FROM MANY SOURCES BUT NO PLACE OF DEATH IS CERTAIN. SO WHERE DID HE DIE?

Marge Samuelson found some answers and allowed me to find other answers to these questions. Marge found that Cornelius was buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York along with ten other deceased DEWITT family members.

With this new information, I contacted the Greenwood cemetery and found that, although, Cornelius was buried on July 3, 1872, he actually died in The Pennsylvania hospital in Philadelphia. By contacting the archivist of the Pennsylvania hospital, I was able to find out that Cornelius entered the hospital on June 12, 1872 and died 18 days later from Tuberculosis. Ordering other information from Greenwood, I noted that Edward Brundige, was listed as the funeral director. He was not an employee of the cemetery, but Edward was to become the future husband of Cornelius', daughter, Louise Dewitt, in September of 1873. He also became my future great-grandfather. Were Edward and Louise a couple at the time of Cornelius' death or did they meet at the burial?

MARGE FOUND A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ABOUT CORNELIUS' SON, JOHN DEWITT, A WELL-KNOWN NY INSURANCE CO. PRESIDENT, WHO DIED IN A DISASTROUS TRAIN ACCIDENT IN 1893.

(Continued on page 9)

# DON'T MISS IT!

## Monthly Meetings (Tri-Area Community Center)

**September 15:** Bev Brice will lead us through the history of quilts and share some of her fabulous family heirlooms with us. If you have a family quilt, come early and we'll display it for all to see. Bev will help you figure out the approximate date and pattern.

**October 20:** D. J. Bassett of the Museum & Arts Center in Sequim and professional photographer will give us tips on taking the perfect tombstone photo and insights into other aspects of cemetery research including ethical considerations and personal safety.

**November 17:** At our annual Breaking Through Brick Walls meeting our team will try to help you find solutions to some of your toughest genealogy problems. If you have a family history question you can't answer, submit information to us and we'll see what we can do! Go to our website (<u>http://wajcgs.org/</u>) to get a submission form. **December 15:** Come share your favorite family holiday traditions and food with your friends in JCGS. Bring some finger food and your holiday spirit!

## Resource Corners (Research Center)

**September 22:** Lesa Barnes will show us some ways to use Microsoft Excel to organize and analyze your family history research. If you have used Excel in your research, let Lesa know what you've tried and how it has benefited you (or what problems you had).

**October 27:** Have you ever thought about using Microsoft Power Point to share your genealogical research with others? Diane Young will give us some ideas on using this software for your family history.

**November 24:** Looking for a different way to tell your family story? Come learn about some of the unique and interesting ways your fellow JCGS members have used to share the fruits of their genealogy labors.

**December:** No Resource Corner this month.

## Discussion Groups: (Research Center)

A chance for people with the same research interest to compare notes, these are informal groups where participants learn from one another.

## Writer's Group: (2nd Saturday of the month at 9:30)

So you have researched your family and now you want to tell the story. There are many ways to do this and the writer's group is a chance to see what others have tried.

## New Netherland Group: (3rd Friday of the month at 9:30)

For those who have families that lived in Dutch New York or New Jersey before 1800. This area was unique with a diverse population, presenting research challenges and assets aplenty. The families were most definitely not all Dutch and much of the time they were governed by the English, but the Dutch gave a unique flavor to the areas. There are many published resources available, most of them translated into English. Join in to see what you can learn about your families.

## The Wild West: (1st Saturday of the month, starting Oct. 6 at 9:30)

The areas West of the Mississippi River have varied histories, but they are all distinct from those areas East of the Big Muddy. Let's get together and explore the history and cultures of this area that shaped our family stories. What experiences, besides traveling West, shaped their lives? What books have you found and loved? I will convene the group and then ask for others to assume the leadership for the discussions. This is an experiment, to cover such a large area but I think it will be fun.

Also see "New Discussion Groups" page 10.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2012

DATE	ALL MEETINGS START AT 9:30 AM AND ARE HELD AT THE RESEARCH CENTER UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
Sat. Sept. 8	Writers Group
Sat. Sept. 15	Monthly Meeting: Family Quilts - Tri-Area Community Center
Fri. Sept. 21	New Netherlands Discussion Group
Sat. Sept 22	Resource Corner: Excel for Genealogists
Thurs. Sept 27	Library Volunteer Meeting
Fri. Sept 28	Canadian Discussion Group
Sat. Oct. 6	Wild West Discussion Group
Sat. Oct. 13	Writers Group
Fri. Oct. 19	New Netherlands Discussion Group
Sat. Oct. 20	Monthly Meeting: Cemeteries and Gravestones
Fri. Oct. 26	Canadian Discussion Group
Sat. Oct. 27	Resource Corner: PowerPoint for Genealogists
Sat. Nov. 3	Wild West Discussion Group
Tues. Nov. 6	Library Committee Meeting
Sat. Nov. 10	Writers Group
Fri. Nov. 16	New Netherlands Discussion Group
Sat. Nov. 17	Monthly Meeting: Breaking Through Walls - Tri-Area Community Center
Thurs. Nov. 22	Thanksgiving - Research Center Closed
Sat. Nov. 24	Resource Corner: Sharing Your Family Research in Interesting Ways
Fri. Nov. 30	Canadian Discussion Group
Sat. Dec. 1	Wild West Discussion Group
Sat. Dec. 8	Writers Group
Sat. Dec. 15	Monthly Meeting: Annual Christmas Get-together
Tues. Dec. 18 - Tues. Jan. 1	Research Center Closed for Holidays

# JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORY

By Marge Samuelson

## THE CYCLE OF HISTORY The depression of the 1890s

The panic thundered west from Wall Street, first clobbering San Francisco, then spreading up the West Coast. There was a run on banks with depositors withdrawing their money or changing it to gold, then burying it. Banks tried to collect mortgage payments, foreclosed on those who couldn't pay, then went bankrupt themselves. Under federal policy a Republican-led Congress had profligately spent away a \$100 million treasury surplus, mostly on enrichment programs for wealthy industrialists. Unemployment rose dramatically.

Sounds like this could have come right off the front pages of today's newspapers, but this was over a hundred years ago. The depressions of 1890, 1893, and the panic of 1896 effected the people of Jefferson County along with the rest of the country.

In 1889 all signs pointed to a prosperous future for the county. The railroad that was to connect Jefferson County to points south was being built, shipping was at its peak, the logging industry and fishing were headed toward wealth for those wise enough to get in early. The population of the county swelled with land speculators, entrepreneurs, and capitalists.

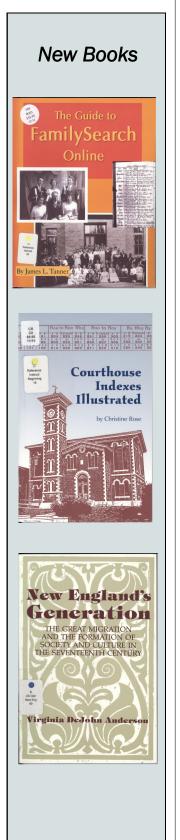
Port Townsend began building large brick buildings. The city council, having learned that wood burns, created an ordinance that buildings in the downtown area must be brick or stone. Ships in the harbor dropped anchor, paying off their crews. There would soon be a saloon on nearly every corner of Water Street.

The Washington Mill company at Port Hadlock and the mill at Port Gamble were shipping lumber all over the world. Quilcene was anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Port Townsend Southern Railroad to their city, mills abounded in the city and the county. Carpenters, masons, business that provided ships provisions, were kept busy, wages were good, the community was taking on the look of prosperity.

For the first time the 1890 census showed the country moving from agrarian to an industrial economy, the majority of Americans no longer lived and worked on farms. All over the country the large cities were growing rapidly, with those moving from the country to the city to the large immigration from Europe. In Jefferson County the Chinese community grew, as well as the Japanese who came to work on the railroads.

As early as 1890 there were signs of a depression on the horizon, land prices were beginning to fall, speculators were panicked when it began to look like the county would not be chosen as the terminus of the railroad. One cause of the depression was the government's passage of the "Sherman Silver Purchase Act, which obligated the government to pay gold in exchange for millions of ounces worth of coinable silver being mined from Western states. Unfortunately, this Act assigned a value to the silver that was radically greater than what public markets paid. The results were a serious undermining of US gold reserves and skyrocketing inflation." [History Link.org]

# NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY



Thanks to the generosity of our members, we have many new resources to help you with your research. Canada The Newfoundland Ancestor Germanv Spelling Variations in German Names **Understanding Meyers Orts** Great Britain/Scotland Aberdeen and Northeast Scotland Family History Society Journal v1-3 Scottish Genealogist v1-3 US History Empire Or Independence 1760-1776 **New England** New England's Generation Mobility & Migration East Anglian Founders Of New England 1629-1640 A Tempest In A Small Town, Granby Ct In The Devil's Snare The Complete Mayflower Descendant, Vol 1-46 & Other Sources, CD Genealogies of Mayflower Families 1500s-1800s, CD Sex in Middlesex Cambridge Cameos Bond's Genealogies and History of Watertown, MA The History and Genealogy of Westmoreland, N H A Delusion Of Satan Weathersfield Century One (VT) Shrewsbury, VT, Our Town As It Was History of Berkshire (VT) **Mid Atlantic** Early Church Records of Somerset Co., N J Vol 1 The Island At The Center Of The World (NY) Long Island Genealogical Source Material Family History: Pennsylvania Genealogies #1, pre-1600s to 1900s, CD Church Records: Selected Areas of Pennsylvania 1600s-1800s, CD South Columbia County Arkansas Misc Records Columbia County Arkansas Cemeteries Family Maps of Vernon Parish Louisiana Melungeons out of the Dungeon (VA) Bible Records of Caroline County, Virginia Families Genesis of a Virginia Frontier-Origins of Franklin Co., VA, 1740-1785

West Virginia Genealogy Sources and Resources

# NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY (CONT.)

Midwest Family Maps of Stephenson County, Illinois Indiana Vital Statistics Births Index 1850-1920, CD Indiana Vital Statistics Marriages Index Disk 1: A- K, 1850-1920, CD Indiana Vital Statistics Deaths Index 1800-1941, CD Family Maps of Henry County Indiana A Hundred Days To Richmond Ohio Vital Records #1 1790s-1870s, CD Marriage Index: Ohio 1789-1850, CD County and Family Histories: Ohio 1780-1970 CD v1-6, Remembering Our Pleasant Hours (WI) West New land, North of the Columbia (WA) The Egg and I Rand McNally Pocket Maps Montana 1941 The Deadliest Woman in the West- Mother Nature Reference National Genealogical Society 2009 Family History Conference Program Syllabus, CD History for Genealogists Time lines Field Guide for Genealogists Courthouse Indexes Illustrated Guide To Family Search Online **Centennial Historical Atlas** Military records: Revolutionary War Soldiers and Sailors, 1775-1782 Vol 1-2, CD S A R Patriot Index 1999 Edition, CD S A R Revolutionary War Graves Register 2000 Edition, CD National Genealogical Society Quarterly Volumes 1-85, CD Index to 42nd Annual 2011 Southern CA Genealogical Society Jamboree, CD

# Wanted - New Books for our Library

Your Society is always on the lookout for new and useful books to add to our collection. We would welcome any donations of books you're no longer in need of or suggestions of books you would find useful. And don't forget about the 50/50 Program. You can partner with the Society to put new reference material in our library that will help your research. Suggest a title and if the Book Committee agrees it is one we can use, we split the cost. You get to use it for the first 6 weeks.

# **Breaking Through Brick Walls (cont.)**

The article says that John had a \$100,000 insurance policy (a lot of money in 1893) and that he has a son and daughter and miscellaneous other family details.

Doing a Google search on John Dewitt I found these additional facts: That John's ancestors came to this country soon after 1650 and that ten family members took part in the Revolutionary War. Another article states: "By the illness and death of his father (Cornelius), he (John) was thrown upon his own resources at the age of fourteen, at which age he left his home and became a clerk in New York City." It would have been 1853 when John reached 14 years of age and perhaps the year that illness took Cornelius away from the family. This would indicate that Cornelius suffered from tuberculosis for at least 19 years before his death. There were very few treatments for TB at that time.

John, age 11 is not listed in the 1850 census. This is the last census that his father appears with the whole family. John, age 21, does appear again in the 1860 census living with his mother, Charity, and her parents in Syracuse, New York.

Another newspaper article refers to John as starting out as a "poor boy" before reaching his great success. But in both the 1850 and 1860 census his family seem to have many resources as well as servants. My conclusion is that John had to work hard without his father's support to become President of the U.S. Life Insurance Co. of NY City at the age of 37.

THROUGH AN INTERESTING NEWSPAPER STORY IN THE 1880 PIKE COUNTY WHEELING REGISTER, MARGE FOUND THAT CORNELIUS WAS ACQUAINTED WITH HORACE GREELEY, EDITOR OF THE NY TRIBUNE.

From this article and further research, I found that Horace, like Cornelius Dewitt, was buried in the famous Greenwood cemetery in NY city. Horace Greeley was a presidential candidate in 1872 and founded an alternative community in Pike Co. Pennsylvania. There are lots of references in the newspaper article which allude to past events which need more research.

I want to find probate and land records for Cornelius and Charity and I have new questions:

During his almost 20 year illness where and how did Cornelius live? Why was Cornelius' daughter, my great grandmother, Louise Dewitt Brundige, not buried in the Greenwood cemetery along with her parents and siblings? Why was Louise not mentioned in her mother's obituary?

Thanks to Marge Samuelson, I now know how and where Cornelius died and most likely the reason he left his family--the dreaded contagious disease of tuberculosis which had little or no treatment in 1850-1870.

# What's New on the Web

## Subscription Websites at the Research Center:

The name of our subscription to "*Footnote*" has been changed to "*Fold 3*" with the acquisition by Ancestry.com. They have started to change the format and search features on the site. The new emphasis for this website is "original military records". The look of the home page has changed. At the top you will see the ability to search specific collections and if you wish to look at Revolutionary War pension records you need to select the "*Revolutionary War Collection*" first.

The search feature has also changed. If you enter a name you will see a dialog box explaining the search features. There is also an option to view a video. It is worth taking a moment to understand the new approach as it is radically different from what was there before.

This site is worth the trouble of learning how to make it work for you!

## In Memory of JGCS Member Eunice Franklin



Our dear friend Eunice. passed away August 22, 2012 in Bellevue WA after a short illness. Eunice was a long time member of the society but more, she was a volunteer in the best sense of the word. As a volunteer in the JCGS Library, she always greeted visitors with a smile and "How can we help?" She was such an intricate part of the society, serving as our recording secretary for eight years, helping with genealogy classes, the education of students, and many other areas. wherever she was needed. Family was the most cherished part of her life and she has left a legacy of her and husband Dick's ancestors that will be long appreciated by her family. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her and our deepest sympathy goes out to her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

## Beginning Genealogy Class: An Introduction to Family History

A great way to start learning about your family is the Beginning Genealogy Class offered by the Jefferson County Genealogical Society. This 5 week class is designed to provide an overview of the basic steps for successful genealogical research. The class can be a helpful refresher to researchers who have started to work on their family history as well as for those who are truly "beginning".

The use of genealogical forms, vital records, and census records will be covered. We will give an introduction to additional types of records such as land, probate, military, and immigration as well. Attention will be paid to online research, but you do not have to use a computer to take the class, as all types of resources will be covered.

The class will be held on 5 Monday afternoons Jan 28th thru Feb 25th 2013 from 1 to 3:30 at the Historical Research Center, 13692 Airport Cutoff Road.

The cost is \$30 for Genealogy Society members and \$50 for one non-member or \$45 each for family groupings (one year membership included in cost). The class is limited to 18 students. Registration will be accepted through Jan 18th, 2013.

To register complete the registration form available at our website wajcgs.org or at the Research Center and mail it with your check to: JCGS, PO Box 627, Port Townsend, WA 98368.

For questions call Eileen 385-0673 or Bev 385-6599.

# **NEW DISCUSSION GROUPS**

## A Second Writers Group

Are there members unable to attend the Sat. morning Family History Writer's Group who would be interested in an afternoon meeting? If you are, please contact me to see if we have enough to plan a new group. Writing our families histories can be more fun when shared. It isn't the quality, it's the writing that matters. Every family tree, limb and branch has stories to tell. Sometimes we are the only ones who remember those stories but we just don't take the time to do anything about it unless we "have to". Contact Phyllis Scidmore, 385-7614,or bpscidmore@olympus.net

A **Canadian Discussion Group** met for several months in the spring. If you are interested in continuing this group, please contact Eileen Martin at <u>eileenm@olypen.com</u>. The group could continue meeting the **4th Friday at 9:30** if there is interest.

Many of you have experimented with **DNA testing** as a way to further your research. We are looking for a speaker for next year on this topic, do you have any suggestions? We can then start a DNA discussion group after the program. Please let Jesse Stewart, chair of Education Committee, know your thoughts and suggestions. jessebirder@cablespeed.com.

# BOOK REVIEW

#### BY BARB LARSEN

#### Family Maps of Stephenson County, Illinois

This is one of several books in a series recently purchased for our library. What an incredible on-going series!

This has helped me locate the precise area of my family's early land holdings. Each township within the county has a Patent Map with the names of original land holder. The next map is a road map with towns and cemeteries. There is a third map for each township called a Historical Map with rivers, streams, lakes, railroads, towns and cemeteries. The family names are indexed. The section number, purchase date, and sale type are given in the index.

The book is *B-US State- IL- Stephenson 01* in our library. Use our data base to search under Family Maps to see if the county book you need is in our library. You may search <u>www.arphax.com</u>, the publisher to view other books in this series. Gregory A. Boyd has compiled the information.

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## Jefferson County, Washington Genealogical Society PO Box 627 Port Townsend **Research Center** Location & Hours 13692 Airport Cutoff Road Hours: 11 to 4 Tuesday-Saturday \$4.00 admission for non-members \$2.00 children We're on the Web! http://www.wajcgs.org Jefferson County History (cont.) (Continued from page 6) With the bankruptcy of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad in March of Meetings: 1893 and the drop in the gold reserves, that caused a panic on wall street known as "Industrial Black Friday," businesses closed their doors, banks went belly up and twenty percent of American workers (between **3rd Saturday** two and three million people) lost their employment. 9:30 AM People moved away, trying to find employment elsewhere, many of the downtown buildings were never finished, the uptown Victorian homes Tri-Area abandoned. The mills were still working but most were on the edge of Community bankruptcy. The world wide depression of the 1890s depressed the mar-Center ket for lumber and by 1896 the days of the sailing ships were numbered, homes were sold at the county tax sales, the population dropped. The Chimacum, county would revive some with the arrival of the military forts but would never regain its promise of a prosperous county. Port Townsend would Washington give up on the ideal of 20,000 people, never to become the "Key City." Visitors Welcome