



# Behind the Scenes at the Keller Heritage Center

Volume IV, Issue 2 & 3

April & July 2008

Stevens County Historical Society

## Opening Weekend !

by Janet Thomas

This May 1st was surely the best opening weekend the Museum has ever had! We put a lot of planning into this year's opening day and it was spectacular!

For those who were not able to be there, we had a ribbon-cutting to celebrate the further restoration and preservation of the Keller House. The ribbon-cutting was attended by the Colville Chamber of Commerce (Trisha Woods), county commissioners (Malcom Freidman) and a representative from Cathy McMorris' office (Karen Dodson). Refreshments were enjoyed by all in the Learning Center.

Attendees toured the Keller

House and were able to see the improvements to Mr. Keller's room. The improvements restored his room to a more period-correct style. Overall, with the more minor repairs that are usually needed in a house of this age, the Keller House has never looked better.

In addition to the ribbon-cutting ceremony, proclamations were issued by the City of Colville and the Stevens County Commission. The proclamations were read at the ceremony. The proclamations demonstrate that the local governmental agencies understand what a treasure the Keller House is to this area.

We are excited for the rest of this season too. While attendance in

May was a bit lower than we usually see, June brought us enough visitors to fill the parking areas on most days. Our association with the Heritage Society and all the efforts of those who have participated in our public relations activities seem to have really gotten the word out about our wonderful Museum. We could not be happier about it! We love it when the Museum is busy.

We have good reason to expect that this will be a vibrant tour season for the Museum and we will definitely plan similar opening weekend festivities in the future.

## Rambles from the Curator

by Becca Gordon

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Now that the new season has started for the museum, things have slowed down for me. Below is a quick update on all that was accomplished prior to our opening at the beginning of the month. Inside the museum, visitors will see updated Native American displays that were done by member Angie Willey. The sports display was also updated with more baseball items and some golf artifacts. This year, this display was updated by member Wendell Reddinger, who did a wonderful job!

I spent a lot of time working on the General Store, attempting to organize and highlight various artifacts on display. More work will be happening on this display as time passes, so keep your eyes open for the changes! I also spent a lot of time working on the Dress Shop display, re-arranging the displays and adding

more dress forms to showcase more pieces from our collection. And last, but not least, the Barber Shop was re-arranged and opened for visitors to enter. An additional display case was added to accommodate the many artifacts associated with the industry.

Other than the occasional accessioning of new donations, not much else is happening right now in my department. I am still looking for willing and able volunteers to work as Assistant Curators for the Lookout Tower and for the Keller House. Interested parties should contact me at home at 509-738-2951. Please leave a message. Or you may email me at [NorwishArchy@hotmail.com](mailto:NorwishArchy@hotmail.com). Until next time . . .

# Around the Grounds

by Marvin Ray

The museum grounds have been completed for the May opening. The cool weather has hindered somewhat the mowing weed eating and painting of the Keller House. However, the insides of the building have been cleaned, repaired and some changes in the displays.

The basement walls have been newly restored. A personal visit to the Keller House is a must.

We are still awaiting warmer weather to start painting the Keller House. We need house painters to help complete the painting project. We also need some volunteers to work with the flowers and yard work. If you know anyone who can help us in any phase of the repainting project, please contact the Museum. The answering machine is always on, so you can leave a message there or

with one of our wonderful tour guides (during regular Museum hours).

The sun is finally coming out, summer has begun and the grounds are starting to look just beautiful. Bring the family for a nice picnic and see them for yourself!

## Thank You!!!

It just wouldn't be right to forget to say thank you to our volunteers and others who have helped the Museum with projects and restoration work, now would it?

Richard Ray, Larry Kristick, Larry Fine and Marvin Ray helped to repair walls and paint in the Keller House. Corbett and Clift Hardwoods refinished the floors and mopboards. If we have forgotten anyone, we don't mean any offense—we'd never make it without our wonderful volunteers. They're the best!

## A Good Read...

We want to let everyone know that Kathy Phillips has mostly finished the Keller House Notebook. It is over four inches thick and contains every reference to the parties of the Keller House that is known. Kathy has put a LOT of work into the notebook, as each page is in an archival sheet protector. Of course, we don't consider it absolutely completed, more a work in progress. After all, the Keller House's history is not finished yet either! It's a good read for a lazy afternoon at the Museum.

## President's Message

by Janet Thomas

It's been a busy first half of the year for me! Cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony was lots of fun.

I was able to attend a grant-writing workshop in Yakima this spring. It was very informative. As you all know, the Museum runs on donations and grants. The more grants we are able to obtain, the better we'll be able to preserve the Keller House and increase interest in our area history in more people.

We have long wanted to redo

Mr. Keller's room. That 60s wallpaper was just hideous. The new walls are so much better. We don't have that wallpaper distracting from the artifacts and antiques displayed in his room. It is a relief to finally have it done!

We are still in need of more tour guides for the Museum. We are so busy now that it is really important to have it fully staffed. It would be terrible to have to keep the Museum closed because we didn't have enough tour guides. Those

that stopped by, expecting the Museum to be open, would not likely stop again and would probably tell their friends that it was closed. We don't want that to happen at all.

If you or anyone you know would like to become a tour guide, please call the Museum and let us know as soon as you can. You can do just a few hours or a set schedule—we'll be happy to accommodate everyone the best we can.

## Tour guides needed A.S.A.P.!

We desperately need more tour guides! Being a tour guide is *easy*. Guides work in three-hour shifts, 10 AM to 1 PM or 1 PM to 4 PM, on days the Museum is open. The greatest need is for Wednesday tour guides and Thursday morning tour guides. It would also be nice to have guides who are willing and/or able to work just an occasional weekend, so that the guides who usually work then can have a weekend off every

now and then.

Guides also receive a complementary Museum membership, which includes the Newsletter. It's a lot of fun to get to know the other Museum members. During the quieter times, you can bring a project to work on. Lots of ladies crochet or knit while waiting for visitors. No matter how you look at it, it's a good deal for everyone!

Behind the Scenes at the Keller Heritage Center Newsletter is a publication of the Stevens County Historical Society for its members. It is published four times a year, in January, April, July and October.

# Stevens County Beginnings...

by Janet Thomas

On the main floor of the courthouse are two display cases. The Historical Society has taken care of it for many years. Recently, it was time to take it apart and clean it and put new things on display.

About the same time The Heritage Network was reviewing their brochure for changes for the summer printing. So the idea of the formation of Stevens County and some historic photographs came to mind. That began the search for information.

Archaeologists report that habitation in this area dates back to about 10,000 years, about the end of the last ice age. The native people had developed a rich culture by the time the Europeans arrived. The Russians claimed what is now Alaska and in 1818 the United States and England claimed joint

occupancy of Oregon Country (not to be confused with Oregon Territory or the State of Oregon). Its boundaries were the 42<sup>nd</sup> parallel to the 54.40<sup>th</sup> and from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The English and its trading companies referred to it as the Columbia district.

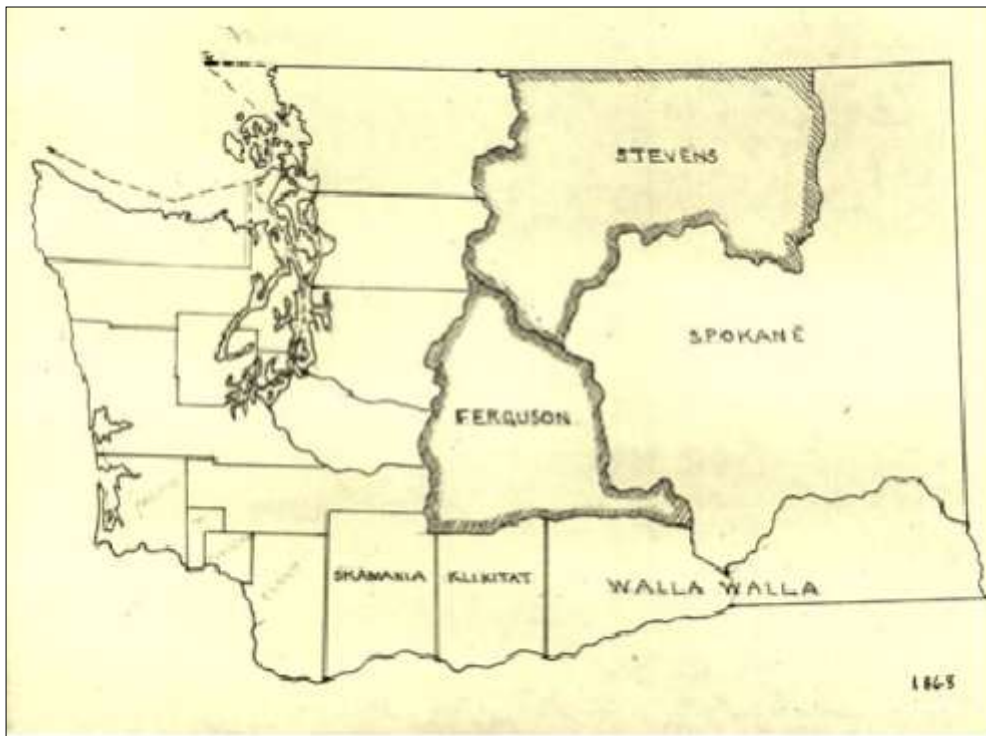
Activity and trade continued in Oregon Country until 1846 when the official boundary between the United States and Canada was agreed upon at the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. During the Washington and Oregon Territorial days there were various counties formed most of which were enormous in size.

In January of 1863, in response to miners who did not want to travel to the current

portion of current Stevens County between the Kettle and the Columbia Rivers. Its boundaries were the Canadian Border on the North, the Columbia River on the East, the Cascades on the West and the Wenatchee River on the South. This is about the current counties of Ferry, Okanogan and Chelan Counties.

Stevens County became larger in the years following and subsequently most of the counties of Eastern Washington were formed from it. And shortly after 1900 the last County, Pend Oreille was broken away.

The details of the formation of the county are very interesting and are still being researched. If anybody reading this knows of a different story about the formation of the county we would like to have the information so that an accurate display can be made at the Courthouse. Unless we can find different information we will begin working on the display soon.



Stevens County, Circa 1863  
*Map courtesy of Washington Secretary of State history website*

county seat in Pinkney City, the Washington Territorial Legislature formed Stevens County. It seems that this was the first mention Stevens as a County. It seems strange now, but the boundaries of the county did not include most of current Stevens County. The only portion which was in the county in 1863 was the

**Visit our website!** Grady Knight has really been working hard on our website. It gets updated regularly and will soon include the latest edition of the Newsletter as well. It's a great place to keep up with what is happening at the Museum, all the special activities and other items of interest. You can see recent photos of activities, visit the store, find out more about the highlights of our collections and more! The web address is <http://www.stevenscountyhistoricalsociety.org>. Visit us soon and let your friends know about it so that they can plan to visit.

Stevens County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 25  
Colville, WA 99114

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**How to Reach Us**

Office Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 AM to 1 PM

Phone/Message Number: (509) 684-5968

Email: [schs@ultraplix.com](mailto:schs@ultraplix.com)

Website: [www.stevenscountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.stevenscountyhistoricalsociety.org)

Address: P. O. Box 25  
700 N. Wynne St., Colville, WA 99114

Museum Hours:

May & September: 1 PM to 4 PM  
June, July, August: 10 AM to 4 PM (Mon.-Thurs.)  
1 PM to 4 PM (Fri.-Sun.)

October through April: Museum & Keller House Tours  
By Appointment.

Research Library Hours:

Wednesday: 10 AM to 1 PM  
Thursday: 1 PM to 4 PM (limited services)

If you need other hours, please call the museum to arrange a different time.