

# BLHS Newsletter

Winter 2020

Mark Your  
CALENDAR



Coming August 8 & 9—  
The 2020 BLHS Biennial Exhibit

## WELCOME!

JOIN the BLHS for the first Quarterly  
Meeting of 2020  
6:00 PM  
Big Lake Community Church  
Thursday, January 23



The Reinard home, located in Walker Valley, was built in 1907 and stood until 2005. Ron Reinard will be our guest at the BLHS Quarterly meeting this month and has some information to share, as well questions. Plan to join us *Thursday, January 23* for the discussion.

## HELP!..

...**Deter costs**—we would like to communicate as much as possible by email. The mailed newsletters cost about \$1000 a year to mail. If BLHS does not have your email please contact Trudi Davis at [biglakehistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:biglakehistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

...**Fill positions** on the BLHS Board—requirements; \$20 life-time membership dues, committed to preserving local history, willingness to participate in Quarterly meetings. Available positions—Vice President and Secretary.

...**Archive and inventory**—historical photos and artifacts.

...**Prepare for**—the 2020 Biennial Exhibit; organize, publicize, serve as an exhibit docent, set-up and take-down exhibits.

## 2020 BLHS Calendars and Books are Available for Purchase

The 2020 Calendars are available at the Big Lake store at \$15.00 each. The photographs in this calendar are an interesting look at the then and now of familiar places in and around the Big Lake communities. Those wishing to get your calendar by mail, may send a check made out to the BLHS in the amount of \$16.00 (which includes postage) to:

BLHS CALENDAR  
C/O Pattie Hanstad Pleas  
17550 Dunbar Road  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

*Big Lake Valley*, BLHS's book of the early history of our local communities is also available at the Big Lake store for \$21.99, or maybe purchased through the mail by sending a check made out to the BLHS in the amount of \$23.00 (includes postage) to:

Melba Hall  
Big Lake Historical Society  
23694 DaLacy Ln  
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICERS

**President** Jim Farmer  
**Treasurer/Historian** Melba Hall

### BOARD

Norma Everett  
Jim Farmer  
Ginger Govern  
Melba Hall  
Dyrk Meyers  
Lloyd Watkinson  
James Wepler

**Newsletter/Website** Trudi Davis



### The Company Houses

The following description of the company houses comes from the *Memories of a SAWMILL TOWN* by Margaret Nichols Banks.

A few small houses face the Sawdust Pile on the western side, near a gate to the lumber yard. All houses in the town were built by the company, all gray, all built of the same-sized tongue-and-groove siding, with gray, unpainted shingle roofs. Most had small porches.

Stretching south along the eastern lakeshore was a long row of Company-built houses facing a road and the water. All had picket fences and a wooden sidewalk about four feet wide ran along the entire row. Picket fences also separated the yards and enclosed the backs of the lots. In the backyards of most houses the company had built outhouses and when we arrived each yard had a woodshed. Since these were of various sizes and construction, I presumed they had been built by renters. Some were quite large, some close to the house and some faced onto an alleyway which ran in back of most of the houses for convenience of hauling wood, usually planer ends from the mill. Most, but not all yards had a well and a hand pump. Some neighbors shared a pump near the alley. And every yard had a bare, black spot on the ground to the left or right of the kitchen door where water was thrown out after use. This water, particularly dish water with its soap (real soap, not detergent), encouraged "fish worms" in abundance. Large, fat angleworms, they were, so catching a string of perch from in front of the houses was no problem.

**About the author:** Margaret Nichols Banks in *Memories of a SAWMILL TOWN* chronicles her life from 1913 when she and her family moved from Cincinnati, Ohio to Big Lake, through the 1920's. She became a linotype operator for various newspapers including the Seattle Times and former Seattle Post Intelligencer, and Seattle Star. She also worked as a proofreader. Permission to reprint was courtesy of Dianna Banks Kleine, daughter of Margaret.

### CONTACT US:

Melba Hall  
Big Lake Historical Society  
23694 DaLacy Ln  
Mount Vernon, WA 98274

Trudi Yarcho Davis:  
**Email:** biglakehistoricalsociety@gmail.com  
**Website:** www.biglakehistory.org

## MOUNT VERNON ARGUS

1911

It Made the News—  
109 years Ago

### Survey for Road Along West Big Lake

County Engineer Knapp started a crew at work this week surveying for an extension of the road along the westside of Big Lake to go to the south end of the lake. It is planned to have the road run along the rear of the waterfront lots, most of which have now been sold. At present the only way of reach property at this part of the lake is by boat, although Dale Tresner and a few others have cut trails to their land. The county has promised to survey the road, if properties owners will help clear. The commissioners granted petitions for this road survey last fall.

### Meanwhile Earlier in the Finn Settlement. . .

Construction of the road to the Finn Settlement from McMurray started in 1898 and was completed in 1900. Charles Granstrom was the road construction supervisor for District 47. It was his job to see that the roads were built and also to hire the workers. Horse-drawn wagons were used to remove all the soil. For many years, it was called the Granstrom Road.

(*Big Lake Valley* P. 91)

