

Stanwood Area ECHOES

Newsletter of the Stanwood Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 69
27108 102nd Ave NW
Stanwood, WA 98292
www.sahs-fncc.org • info@sahs-fncc-org



Stanwood Area Echoes

Issue No. 61 : Winter, 2019

WISCONSIN TIMBER COMPANY CA. 1921



Thirty-nine men on the mill crew at the Wisconsin Timber Company, ca. 1921. This company was located where the Hamilton smokestack is today. Photographed by John T. Wagness

For more on Winsconsin Timber Company see page 3.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends:

American businessman James Cash Penney said that “change is vital, improvement the logical form of change.” Improvement was the operative word last fall at the Stanwood Area Historical Society, but in two distinctively different ways. Our first efforts involved physical improvements to the complex including painting the ramps on the Floyd and Tolin House (and its front porch) as well as continuing work on a new renovation of our historic Pearson House.

Thanks to a grant from Snohomish County, we were able to hire some very talented craftsmen who removed the 1960s era built-in counters and cupboards from the Pearson home’s kitchen, installed wainscoting in the kitchen and parlor areas and tackled some nasty spots of exterior wood rot. The restoration of the kitchen along with free standing cabinets will return these areas to what would have been more historically accurate in the early 20th century. Great appreciation goes to the volunteers who participated in the paint parties which included the Pearson kitchen and parlor where new color accents are adding to the home’s period decor. We hope to open the home again this spring for public viewing of this historic treasure with its improvements.

The other improvement of the fall was more visceral. This involved our Veteran’s Day celebration and a moving presentation of the Missing Man Table also known as the Fallen Comrade ceremony. Several local veterans participated in placing symbolic items on the white tablecloth representative of the loss for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for this country. Political theorist John Locke said that “the improvement of understanding is for two ends: first our own increase in knowledge; secondly to enable us to deliver that knowledge to others.” I believe that was accomplished by the sober and touching ceremony at the Floyd for our veterans.

The rich resource that is the complex of the Stanwood Area Historical Society offers a wonderful venue to deliver knowledge to others. But these

efforts require the generosity of volunteers to make that happen—volunteers that are more and more in short supply. If you have any interest in assisting in helping us raise the cultural awareness of our community, we ask you to contact us and become a part of something that has lasting value.

Sincerely,

Richard Hanks, President

Stanwood Area Historical Society

Stanwood Area Historical Society Effective January 1, 2019

<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>TERM (2Yr)</u>
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Vice President , Dan Lien	2018-2019
Recording Secretary , John Smistad	2019-2020
Corr. Secretary , Margaret Utgard	2019-2020
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Penny Buse	2019-2021
Robert Branigin	2019-2021
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Newsletter Editors

Richard & Robin Hanks

LABOR, LUMBER AND VETERANS' RIGHTS

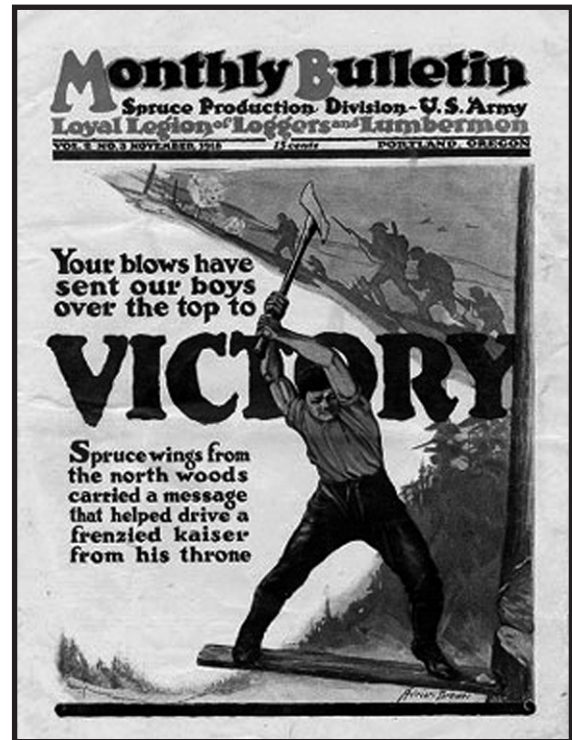
November 11, 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, later becoming Veterans Day by an act of Congress in 1954. American servicemen could not fully celebrate their victory while still on duty in Europe in November 1918. For some Stanwood veterans their observance of the holiday a year later collided with the demands of their lumber mill managers leading to a spontaneous labor action.

The turbulent year of 1916 marked the construction of a mill by the Wisconsin Timber Company in Stanwood by George Kunze. Kunze was born in Appleton Wisconsin in 1865. He came to the Washington in 1894 and followed the logging and mill business. In 1900 he and his younger brother Ben were operating the Michigan Shingle Company in Arlington. In 1904 he married Anna Smith and was mayor of Arlington in 1910 and 1914. The 160,000-square foot Stanwood Wisconsin mill, with four large fireproof dry-kilns, would employ upwards of 100 men during peak operations.

Kunze's Stanwood operation was a means to an end. It had been ten years since electric lights were first introduced to downtown Stanwood by Clint Knox and F. Query and a general overhaul of the system was needed. Kunze won a 50-year franchise for the Light and Power Company if, in addition, he agreed to construct the mill. Shavings from the mill could feed the kilns to generate power for the city's lights. By early 1916 the mill was a reality.

The transient lifestyle of many loggers made unionization difficult in the Northwest since most traveled throughout the region securing work. Shingle weavers did organize in 1903 and in August 1917 the AF of L chartered, as an affiliate, the International Union of Timberworkers. Most, if not all, of Stanwood's Wisconsin Timber Company mill workers were members of the I.U.T.

Tensions between loggers and mill owners were growing in the Northwest at the beginning of the 20th century. The work was dangerous with long hours and scant pay of around 35 cents an hour. As early as 1907 the I.W.W. (International Workers of the World) dubbed the Wobblies had begun efforts to organize Washington state workers but without much success. The Wobblies represented the radical fringe of the union movement whose confrontational and sometimes violent tactics were often rejected by



The monthly bulletin of the Spruce Production Division and the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen exhorted the men to work hard to help "drive the frenzied kaiser from his throne."

many workers. Clashes between the I.W.W. and authorities escalated in November 1916 with the Everett Massacre as vigilantes and law enforcement challenged Wobblies along the docks with at least seven deaths as a result.

Resistance to the IWW came in the form of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, dubbed the 4L, a government created organization which practically established military control over the American lumber industry. Loyalty oaths were demanded from workers and the 4L prohibited any union organization during the war, including the AF of L. Chris Canterbury wrote that "wartime military intervention in the form of the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen... was the greatest challenge the Timberworkers faced." However, the 4L aided by the Wilson administration did accomplish getting an eight-hour work day for American lumber workers in March 1918, a long term goal of American unions. Workers' rights were in question, at the Wisconsin Timber Company, however, which was chastised for violating 4L rules for not paying workers overtime.

(Continued on Page 4)

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One of the workers at the Wisconsin mill was James B. Wisecup. He had served in the U.S. Army in France from September 1917 until February 1919. Upon his return to Washington, he was hired by Wisconsin Timber as a sawyer in their mill. Wisecup had logging experience as a member of the 10th and later 20th Engineers (Forestry) in Europe where the demand for American foresters and their skills was vital to support war-time infrastructure. The Engineers became the largest American battalion in the conflict. They operated all over France managing forests, logging and running saw mills. Their counterpart in the States was the Spruce Division which was formed in 1917 to supply particularly Sitka spruce for American aircraft construction. All those loggers were also required to be members of 4L.

Wisconsin Timber had hired many returning veterans such as Wisecup. With the advent of 1919, incoming Washington Governor Louis Hart declared that November 11th—Armistice Day—would be a legal holiday. Veterans looked forward to celebrating the great peace won by their sacrifice having been absent winning the victory a year earlier. They felt it their right to commemorate the event by taking a half day off from their mill work on that momentous day despite the prohibition of such a holiday by mill supervisors.

The workers appealed to their union the I.U.T. and a committee was formed with Wisecup

as spokesman to approach the company. It was decided that regardless of management opposition, the men would take a half day off work which is what happened. The next day Wisecup was singled out and dismissed by Wisconsin Timber for missing work despite the law making it illegal to fire a man for taking a recognized holiday. The official reason was that Wisecup had been lax in his responsibilities for weeks. Cynical union organizers pointed to Wisecup's exemplary work record and higher than normal hourly wage as proof that this was simple retaliation and to send a message to other workers.

After Wisecup's firing, his fellow mill workers finished their shift and gathered along with some townspeople at the Sons of Norway hall in Stanwood, where they formed a committee to seek reinstatement of Wisecup. Newspaper accounts say mill management refused their demand. The I.U.T. workers voted a week later to protest the firing of Wisecup with a strike. All but 20 walked out on November 17, 1919. Three days later two trains brought nearly 60 workers from Seattle who had been recruited by Wisconsin Timber to replace the striking laborers. They were met at the train station by strikers accompanied by two sheriff deputies who escorted all the men to the Sons of Norway hall to hear their explanation for the strike. This swayed the Seattle men, especially the discrimination against a veteran and they, to a man, refused Wisconsin's employment and returned home on the evening train after demanding and receiving reimbursement for their expenses.

The duration of the strike is not known but it appears to have been short lived and did not result in the reinstatement of Wisecup. As for what happened to James Wisecup we can make only an educated assessment but a James Wisecup appearing in the 1920 census seems likely. He is listed as a mill sawyer living in a boarding house in Seattle. Wisecup soon became a postal carrier in the Seattle area; a position he held until his death in 1945. His army record matches that of the man dismissed from Wisconsin Timber Company in 1919. The 4L employment agent who sent the Seattle men north was convicted in April 1920 of fraud "for misrepresenting to men the industrial conditions prevailing at the mills of the Wisconsin Lumber company at Stanwood, leading them to believe there was no strike at that place..." The agent, William H. Cayo, was fined \$150.00.



The Wisconsin Mill site ca. 1917 photographed by John T. Wagness.
SAHS 88.07.352.16

In the months after the strike, financial problems plagued Wisconsin mill owner George Kunze. Said to be suffering from “melancholia” (a malady popularized in the 19th century) he took a room in Everett’s Mitchell Hotel where one self-inflicted gunshot ended his life on December 28, 1921. The mill closed soon after. The mill and its assets passed into receivership—a process of roughly 18 months to sell off Wisconsin’s resources. Consolidating debts, changing bids, contending factions and a lawsuit by Kunze’s widow slowed the process.

Stanwood attorney George Mitchell initially had the high bid of \$75,000 for both the mill and its assets. Others countered, however, and negotiations continued. Receiver Harry Landsdowne finally broke up the mill’s various properties and Herbert J. Clough bought the mill alone for \$60,000 on May 20, 1923 and Clough Lumber Company incorporated soon afterwards.

Clough’s uncle, former Minnesota Governor David Marston Clough, controlled the Clark/Nickerson Company among other mills in Everett. He was a chief figure in what historian Norman Clark called the “sawdust baronage” of the area. After Clark-Nickerson David Clough went on to build “a galaxy of milling and logging outfits” run and operated by his extended family including the Clough Lumber Company of Stanwood. A 2013 government report associated Clough with other industry leaders who “used whatever tactics necessary to keep profits high and stem the influence of organized labor.”

Aside from the injustices toward labor, James Wisecup was also collateral damage to a struggle which even today has not been completely addressed—how we treat our veterans when the fighting is over. Wisecup fought in foreign lands to defend his country’s honor and security but had to continue his battle for his personal rights refused at home. The expediency of profit is a poor excuse for a country’s systemic indifference to such sacrifice.

by Richard A. Hanks

Sources: David M. Clough, www.Historiceverettwaterfront.com; Cindy Roaf, *Barons of Decision*, archives.evergreen.edu; *The Labor Journal*, November 28 and December 12, 1919, January 30 and July 23, 1920; SWCA/Northwest Archaeological Associates, Seattle, WA, *Archaeological Resources Assessment for the Kimberly-Clark Worldwide Site Upland Area, Everett, Snohomish County, WA*, March 25, 2013; Norman H. Clark, *Mill Town: A Social History of Everett, WA...1972*.



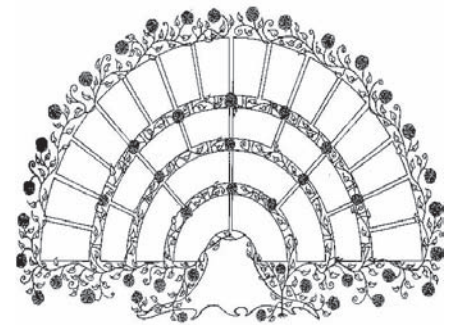
The Floyd Norgaard Cultural Center, The Pearson House & The Eldridge Center

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The Village Photographer
Billy Jennings

AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

The photo above shows as many volunteers as we could assemble to get their picture with Santa. The Stanwood Area Historical Society puts on a variety of events each year, from the 4th of July Parade to Old Fashioned Christmas, with a core group of volunteers. We welcome the community to consider volunteering in any way they feel comfortable.

We have recently taken on the Snow Goose & Birding Festival on the last weekend of February and we expect thousands to attend this event. We are using it as an opportunity to highlight local artists as well as all of the incredible educational organizations.

Our Spring Tea and Fashion Show will be here earlier than usual on March 30th. Once again we will have the Stanwood High School culinary class catering and serving under the new direction of Brian Wallis. We will also have tours of our newly restored Pearson House, which we have been working on for months.

There are many ways you can help, have fun and make a difference in your community.



SAHS Memorials

In Memory Of:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Orville Hanson | Margaret Utgard |
| | Janet Utgard |
| Roger Covert | Dennis & Shirley Anderson |
| | Jerry & Rose King |
| Ray Lund | Margaret Utgard |
| William Grimm | Martha L. Young |
| Warren Christoferson | Margaret Utgard |
| | Janet Utgard |
| Marjorie Eldridge | Jerry & Rose King |
| | Margaret Utgard |
| Mary Mickelson Colwell | Joni Smith |
| Virginia Hansen Anderson | Margaret Utgard |
| Christopher & Minnie Olsen | Lester Filion |
| Olive Olsen Lundmark | Clayton & Joann Olsen |
| Alex Eckle | Margaret Utgard |

SAHS Donations

- Pam Trojanoski & Robert Hall
 Phil & Candy Trautman
 Penny Buse
 Beth Bryant

**SAHS Board & Member Meetings -
 Please join us every month on the
 Second Tuesday at 4:00 pm on the
 second floor of the Eldridge Center.**



EVENTS @ THE FLOYD

January 27th • 2 p.m.

Piano & Spiritus Winds Concert

February 2nd • 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

**The Softer Side of the
South End String Band**

February 23-24 • 10a.m. - 4p.m.

Snow Goose & Birding Festival

March 17th • 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**History and Hors d'oeuvres
Tessa Hulls - She Traveled Solo**

March 30th • 12:30 p.m.

Spring Tea & Fashion Show

April 28th • 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

**History and Hors d'oeuvres
Rick Castellano - Island Co. Historical**



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RENT THE FLOYD



The Floyd Norgaard Cultural Center Public Hall is available for the arts, music, theater, cultural events as well as a banquet hall for family events, weddings, reunions, birthdays, & business meetings.

Proceeds from rentals and events benefit the continuing preservation and rehabilitation of the Public Hall and SAHS educational and historical projects and programs.

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GET INVOLVED...STAY IN TOUCH

The Stanwood Area Historical Society is a special place. It collects and conserves the wondrous treasures of history that define our community. Your participation would not only assist in this crucial protection of our past, but would make you part of our important work. You can make a difference. Join SAHS today!

Memberships are due annually in January. This is a significant means of support for the Society and includes a subscription to the newsletter. SAHS is a tax-exempt non-profit organization and depends on gifts, bequests from individuals and groups, fundraising activities and membership dues for its financial support. Your contributions are tax deductible and will be used only for the preservation of the history of our area.

- Individual Membership: **\$20.00**
- Student (Under 15) Membership: **\$5.00**
- Family Membership: **\$25.00**
- Lifetime Individual Membership (+65 yrs of age): **\$100.00**

Name [Please print] _____

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P. O. Box 69 ~~~ 27112 102nd Ave. N. W., Stanwood, Washington ~~~ www.sahs-fncc.org Photographer: G. D. Horton, circa 1886, Stanwood Stillaguamish River Waterfront

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE BY JANUARY 31ST. THANK YOU!

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