



Potlatch at 80--A Celebration

A project sponsored by the Latah County Historical Society and supported by donations and a grant from the Association for the Humanities in Idaho, a state-based committee of the National Endowment for the Humanities

Special Project Newsletter

March 1986

Potlatch Project Gains Momentum

It has now been 80 years since the first permanent resident moved into Potlatch, and the Potlatch at 80 project is generating a considerable amount of enthusiasm. The project began in the fall of 1984 when the Latah County Historical Society and a group of Potlatch volunteers--Florence Anderson, James Dewey, Lee Gale, Nettie Gale, Adeline Howard, Dwight Strong, and Paul Tobin--began raising funds to publish a book on the town's history. Fundraising was so successful that other project activities were added. In addition, the Potlatch Lions Club has chosen "Potlatch at 80" as the theme of its annual Community Day celebration this summer.

This is our second project newsletter, and in it we think you will find updated information on all of the various components of the Potlatch at 80 project. Indeed, 1986 is shaping up as a very important year in Potlatch history!

The Association for the Humanities

As we noted in our last newsletter, in addition to receiving contributions from 195 individuals, families, businesses, and organizations for the Potlatch at 80 project, the Latah County Historical Society also received an

\$8,615 grant from the Association for the Humanities in Idaho (AHI), the state-based committee of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The AHI awards grants to non-profit organizations which make humanities projects available to the public. Quite simply, much of what we do at the Historical Society--and much of what other humanities organizations in Idaho do--would be impossible without AHI support. The AHI is "behind the scenes" of dozens of valuable and educational projects each year--projects in grade schools and universities; in senior citizens' homes and museums; projects that reach the public through radio broadcasts, newspaper stories, books, slide programs, panels, traveling exhibits, and in a wide variety of other ways.

Too often, granting organizations do not receive the recognition they deserve for jobs well done. Those of us interested in preserving Potlatch history can thank the AHI for its invaluable assistance. And remember, it would do no harm in these days of projected budget cutting to write your Congressional representatives and remind them that the miniscule portion of the federal budget spent on the NEH does perhaps more to return tax funds to small communities like Potlatch than any other federal program.

And About Your AHI Gift

All of you who donated to the Potlatch at 80 project signed a form which stated that your gift would be used to match grant funds, making even more money available for the project. In order to comply with guidelines set forth by the National Endowment for the Humanities, it is necessary that we again, in the following language, inform all donors of the arrangements for these gifts:

Thank you for your gift to the Association for the Humanities' project S0-84B-23, "Potlatch at 80." As you know, your gift generated an equal amount of matching funds through the Gifts and Matching program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. All of your gift went directly to the "Potlatch at 80" project. Half of the National Endowment for the Humanities' match directly benefitted the "Potlatch at 80" project while the other half of the National Endowment for the Humanities' match went for general support of the Association for the Humanities in Idaho.

Potlatch Community Day

Potlatch's annual Community Day will be jointly sponsored by the Potlatch Lions Club and the Latah County Historical Society this year, and it will be a special event in recognition of the town's 80th anniversary. The theme, appropriately enough, will be "Potlatch at 80." In addition to the regular fun events--the breakfast, parade, fun run, contests, and awards--this year's Community Day on Saturday July 26 will feature numerous historical exhibits. The Historical Society will have room set aside in the Potlatch grade school where it will have a large exhibit on Potlatch architecture, and will also display many of the photos, reminiscences, and other materials relating to Potlatch

that people have donated to the Society as a result of the Potlatch at 80 project. We will also have a quiet area set aside with free refreshments where people can sit, visit, and reminisce.

Potlatch Community Day is a great time for local people to come and visit with their neighbors. This year will be a special time for out-of-towners to come back to Potlatch and remake old acquaintances. We hope you will be there.

For further information contact the Potlatch Lions Club, P.O. Box 322, Potlatch, ID. 83855; or the Latah County Historical Society, 110 S. Adams, Moscow, ID. 83843.

The Potlatch History Book

Our author, Keith Petersen, reports that he has finished writing rough drafts of the first ten chapters of the book, which will be twelve chapters long. As he finishes each chapter he is sending them out to various readers who are making comments. He is also interviewing long-time Potlatch residents and reading the reminiscences that people are sending to the Historical Society, adding these stories to the manuscript. He will begin re-writing the manuscript with these additions shortly.

When the final manuscript is completed--hopefully by June--it will be sent to the Washington State University Press for approval and final editing. Then the book's designer will begin working with the Historical Society selecting illustrations, the text will be typeset, the book will be designed, printed and bound. We feel that we are right on schedule for our anticipated early 1987 publication date.

Preserving Potlatch History

One of the unique aspects of the Potlatch at 80 project is that not only is it a celebration for those participating in 80th anniversary activities in 1986, but it also will leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Nearly every aspect of the project has been planned with historic preservation in mind.

One of the most important of the Potlatch at 80 projects is the gathering of historic photographs and manuscript materials relating to Potlatch, the Potlatch Lumber Company, and families who lived in town or worked for the company. These materials are being added to the Historical Society's research library where they will be processed, cataloged, and permanently maintained for research use. We have already received over 350 historic photographs and numerous collections of reminiscences, clippings, and other research items.

We strongly encourage people with an interest in Potlatch to donate or loan diaries, letters, ledgers, reminiscences, photographs, clippings, or other such materials. If you want to retain the originals, we will be happy to make copies and return the originals to you.

To date we have received donations of research materials from the following people. We thank them for their interest in preserving Potlatch history.

George Adair, photographs
Frederick P. Billings, clippings, photos
Eugene Burden, reminiscences
Mrs. H. Cagle, color slides
Raymond Cameron, reminiscences
Josephine Thompson Cox, photos
Katheryn Vowell Fader, photos
Mike Fritz, photos
Lee Gale, photos, oral history interview
Dr. F.C. Gibson, Jr., reminiscences, photos
Amber Gleave, Gordon Gleave's reminiscences
of a Potlatch boyhood
Pearl Hanson, reminiscences, clippings,
photos

Walter Hegg, photos
Louise M. Heighes, reminiscences
Conrad and Inger Hermsted, photos
Julian G. Humiston, reminiscences,
photos, clippings, correspondence
concerning his father W.D. Humiston
Esme Kindelan, photos
Richard King, photos
Eleanor and Jack Larkin, clippings,
photos
Carol Lemke, information on the W.I.
& M. Railway
Jean Monnett, photos
Leo Nelson, photos
Francis Nonini, photos
Alta O'Connell, reminiscences, photos
Keith Petersen, photos
Barbara M. Porath, photos
Potlatch Corporation, photos
Elsie, Malcolm, and Edgar Renfrew,
oral history interviews
Louise Nygaard Rosenholz, reminiscences,
clippings, photos
Malcolm Rossman, reminiscences, photos
Robert Schnurr, clippings, photos
Pearl Shaffer, reminiscences, photos
F.J. Stapleton, photos
Charles Talbott, Jr., reminiscences,
photos
J.L. Terteling, information on the
Potlatch Brick Company
Charles F. Woods, photos

The Slide/Tape Program

One of the key components of the Potlatch at 80 project will be a synchronized slide/tape program about the Potlatch mill. In 1983, prior to mill dismantling, the late John Talbott of Moscow, long-time Historical Society volunteer and outstanding photographer, lead a team of Historical Society volunteers during six days of photography, documenting the entire millsite. The film and processing was paid for by a generous donation from Potlatch Corporation. These photographs, as well as numerous historical pictures, will be utilized in the slide program.

In February, 1986 Lee Gale of Potlatch narrated on tape the story of a log from the time it splashed down in the mill's log pond until it was shipped as finished lumber from the plant. During his nearly 40 years at Potlatch, Lee personally experienced work at many of the plant's various departments and is uniquely qualified to tell the sawmill's story.

Utilizing the facilities of the University of Idaho's audio-visual laboratory, generously furnished free-of-charge by the Department of Wildland Recreation Management, the Historical Society will edit Lee's nearly four hours of narrative into a 45-minute program. This audio portion will then be synchronized with the slides so that the program will run automatically.

Once the program is completed, it will help to preserve the history of the mill. Copies of the program will be donated to the Potlatch School Library, the University of Idaho, the Idaho State Library, and the Association for the Humanities in Idaho, in addition to the copy retained by the Historical Society.

By the way, we will not throw away all of the extra material Lee provided that cannot be used in the slide program. His tapes will be indexed and added to the Society's large oral history collection where they will be permanently available for research use.

Potlatch on Exhibit

Another integral part of the Potlatch at 80 project is a series of traveling exhibits that will tour north-central Idaho communities in 1986 and 1987.

Four of the exhibits will be photographic. One will focus on the architecture of the mill and town, while another will depict the unique Potlatch school system. One exhibit will feature the history of Elk River, another town constructed by the Potlatch Lumber Company. The fourth photographic exhibit will focus on the towns of Deary and Bovill and the impact of the Lumber Company upon their development.

The Historical Society will also do a larger exhibit utilizing both historical objects and photographs which will be set up in the Forestry Building at the University of Idaho in the spring of 1986. On April 2, the Society, the College of Forestry, and the University of Idaho Special Collections Library will jointly sponsor a public reception officially opening the papers of the Potlatch Lumber Company. Richard Madden, Potlatch Corporation's Chief Executive Officer and many other people will be on hand for this occasion. This large research collection was preserved largely through the efforts of the Historical Society working with the University Library and Paul Tobin and Jack Gruber of Potlatch Corporation. The Society's exhibit will depict the history of Potlatch and the Potlatch at 80 project and will remain on public view through the University's commencement in May.

The Latah County Historical Society

In our last newsletter we told you a little about the Latah County Historical Society, the organization sponsoring the Potlatch at 80 project, and included a membership form with the newsletter. A good number of you joined the Society then, and it is NOT time for you to renew again, but we are including a membership form again this time for those of you who might not yet have joined. We do this not to pressure anyone to join the Historical Society, but because we think you might like to know something about us. And if you want to keep informed about Latah County history--especially those of you no longer living in the county--joining the Society is an excellent way to do so. Society memberships also make excellent gifts--just fill out and return the enclosed membership form telling us who the gift membership is to and who it is from, and we will let the person know you made a gift in his or her name.

The Latah County Historical Society was formed in 1968 and opened a museum in Moscow in 1971. Since that time it has grown into one of the largest and most active county historical agencies in the Northwest. It is recognized nationally as a leader among small historical agencies.

In addition to maintaining the museum, the Society has an excellent research library--where donations of Potlatch photos and archival materials are now being cataloged. It has published over 20 books about local history; has one of the largest oral history collections in the West; and it has an outreach program that serves people from pre-schoolers to senior citizens. It also publishes Latah Legacy, a quarterly journal of local history, which is sent to all members. Members also receive a 20 percent discount on all Society books.

As an example of the Society's ongoing activities to preserve local history, we would like to tell you about a current project that coincides nicely with the Potlatch at 80 project. In November, 1985, the American Association for State and Local History in Nashville, Tennessee announced that the Society was one of 18 recipients--out of 376 applicants from throughout the United States--of its prestigious grants-in-aid. This grant will be used to transcribe the handwritten diaries of Charles O. Brown, which are housed at the University of Idaho Library. Brown was one of the earliest Great Lakes lumbermen to recognize the value of Idaho timber, moving here in 1894, settling in Moscow and cruising timber in Latah County and along the Clearwater River. For six years he attempted to interest Lake States lumber barons to invest here, to no avail. Finally in 1900 Frederick Weyerhaeuser agreed to come visit. Brown took him on an eight day horseback ride through Idaho forests, and almost immediately upon the trip's conclusion Weyerhaeuser and associates formed the Clearwater Timber Company, headquartered in Lewiston. Shortly thereafter, they formed the Potlatch Lumber Company.

Brown's diaries detail his life and activities from 1893 to the time he died in 1902. It truly was an important period, not only in Idaho history, but in national forestry history. These valuable diaries will be edited by the Society and published, probably in late 1987 or early 1988.

The Society has many other exciting projects going all the time. We are always looking for new members to share Latah County's rich history with. Your support will enable you to keep informed about our activities and will bring local history to your home in the form of Latah Legacy four times a year. It will also help us to continue our work to preserve Latah County history for future generations. If you haven't already, we hope you will join us.

More Project Donors--Thank You

In our first project newsletter, we listed over 170 individuals, families, businesses, and organizations that had contributed to the Potlatch at 80 project. Their names--as well as those below--will appear again in an acknowledgement in the front of the Potlatch history book. We are pleased to list here the donors who have contributed since the last project newsletter was mailed. We greatly appreciate the interest of all donors--nearly 200 of you--who have helped us insure that the history of Potlatch will be preserved.

Some people asked that we not publicize their donation. We thank them anyway, and we are happy to adhere to their request. For those of you listed below, PLEASE FIND YOUR NAME AND MAKE SURE IT IS SPELLED ACCURATELY AND IS LISTED AS YOU WOULD LIKE IT IN THE BOOK. If you wish to make a change, please immediately write "Potlatch at 80", c/o Latah County Historical Society, 110 S. Adams, Moscow, ID. 83843.

SPONSOR

C.J. Johnson, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Johnson (Lewiston)

SUPPORTERS

Pearl Hanson, in memory of Ray Hanson (Clarkston, WA.)
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Otto H. Leuschel, Jr., in memory of Otto and Ferris Leuschel (Portland)
Lois Hodge Shute, in memory of Alice and Shelley Hodge (Anchorage, AK.)

CONTRIBUTORS

Vera V. Alsterlund, Marilyn K. Westerkamp, and Ronald A. Alsterlund, in memory of Alfred I. (Pedie) Alsterlund (Potlatch)
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick P. Billings, in memory of Charles Lee Billings (Tacoma)
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Larry Poston, in memory of Jack Poston (Potlatch)
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Donald W. Thompson, in memory of Dr. Joseph W. Thompson (Vallejo, CA.)
Vina B. Turner, in memory of George T. Cochrane (Potlatch)
Maxine Walser (Potlatch)

We also want to thank:

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