

HERITAGE NEWS

Fall, 2020

Rainier Valley Historical Society

Volume 29, Issue 2

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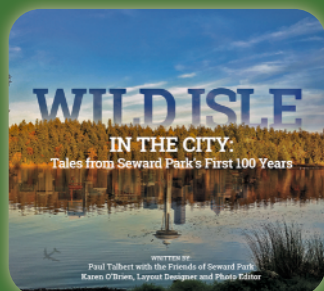
2020 Highlights



Four Dismantling Racism forums sponsored by King County 4Culture



New Seward Park torii



Paul Talbert & Karen O'Brien recipients of the 2020 AKCHO Virginia Folkins book award



Rainier Valley Historical Society Presents!
THIS OLD KITCHEN
A BI-WEEKLY COOKING SHOW USING OUR COLLECTION'S RECIPES
Two cooking show episodes on YouTube from: Rainier Valley Food Stories Cookbook

December 10, 2020

Dear RVHS community,

As 2020 comes to a challenging close, we are grateful for the generosity of many that have helped us through the year. Donations and a Sustaining Grant from 4Culture gave us the support we needed to survive operational changes due to the pandemic. We shifted our public programming to hosting online events, and so thankful this option exists on all fronts. With staff working remotely, our archives and database were given extra care, by increasing the size of our online presence. However, in the absence of gathering in-person for our annual RVHS Founder's Dinner and Auction, we have a shortfall for next year's budget. **We are asking those of you who are able, to please join/renew your membership for 2021 and/or make a year-end gift to RVHS using the enclosed envelope.** For your consideration, we've outlined our year in review, showing how we strive to be current with the worldwide "Black Lives Matter" movement, how we work toward equity in the archives, and demonstrate why we have been entrusted with caring for thousands of historical photographs and artifacts.

2020 Highlights

- **Formed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.** We examined our mission statement and initiated a plan to improve how we collect, preserve, interpret, and share stories of all cultures. We stand in solidarity for justice and equality for Black Americans, Indigenous people, and People of Color.
- **Hosted the RVHS 129th Annual Meeting via Zoom featuring Kubota Garden's documentary *Fujitaro Kubota and His Garden*.** To view, visit Densho Digital Library at Densho.org
- **Created a virtual tour of Kubota Garden with Don Brooks**, retired head gardener who was mentored by Tom Kubota. The tour is visible on our YouTube channel, RVHS Video.
- **Improved how our photographs are described** with adding subject terms by heritage, action and Rainier Valley neighborhood, an important step for accessing material by topic.
- **Created and premiered two episodes of *This Old Kitchen***, a cooking show of recipes from the Rainier Valley Food Stories Cookbook available to view on our YouTube channel, RVHS Video.
- **Hosted four Dismantling Racism Series** forums documenting contemporary conversations on topics: "Contested Boundaries," "Racism and Voting Rights," "Living Black in Seattle", "Let's Talk About DACA", held over Zoom, visible on our YouTube channel, RVHS Video.
- **Created a Comet Lodge Cemetery Virtual Tour** to view visit YouTube, RVHS Video channel.
- **Posted the Beyond the Laundry exhibit** visible on our website, rainiervalleyhistory.org.
- **Reorganized the Hall-Summers Printed Materials Collection** to improve search options.
- **Added photographs to our online database site at:** rainiervalleyhistory.pastperfectonline.com
- **Created a *Black Lives Matter* and *Get out to VOTE* exhibit** for the office window display.
- **Visited the Bush School on History Day** for a Q & A session.
- **Paul Talbert and Karen O'Brien received the AKCHO Virginia Folkins Award** for best historical publication, *Wild Isle in the City: Seward Park's First 100 Years*. (friends-of-seward-park.square.site).
- **Seward Park torii was installed**, Lifetime members Paul Talbert and Karen O'Brien served on the Seward Park Torii Project Committee. The torii is featured in the book *Wild Isle in the City*.
- **Published the "Heritage News"** in Spring and Fall circulated to 500 recipients and posted on our website.

Your continued interest and support is appreciated,

Karen O'Brien

Rainier Valley Historical Society, President

Thank you to King County
4Culture for supporting
our work!



WOMEN IN ISOLATION AT RAINIER BEACH CRITTENTON HOME

- by Eleanor Boba and
Nancy Dulaney

This article is excerpted from a longer essay on the history of the Crittenton Home for unwed mothers. In this space we will offer a brief look at some of the young women who passed through its doors. In its entirety, visit: <https://remnantsofourpast.blogspot.com/2020/11/mutual-benefit-girls-and-women-of.html>

The mission of the Florence Crittenton Home in Seattle, as stated in the 1900 Articles of Incorporation, was the “founding, maintenance and conducting of a home and refuge for fallen women and the children thereof.” One of dozens of such institutions founded by evangelical philanthropist Charles Crittenton, the home pledged to “train and rehabilitate worthy unwed prospective mothers, and to render to these mothers such aftercare and assistance as will help keep mother and child together until such time as they find their proper place in society.”¹

From 1899 to 1973, the Crittenton Home operated on Renton Avenue in the Rainier Beach neighborhood, with a two-year interruption during World War II when the home was requisitioned for use as a venereal disease treatment center for so-called “Victory Girls.”* Women of the Crittenton Rescue Circle purchased the original Victorian structure in 1899 and fitted it out with classrooms, medical examining rooms, two maternity wards, and a delivery room; hospital births were still decades away. The home was definitely in the boonies. There were no paved roads and few sidewalks,



*Jessie Newman and Kaoru Yamataya, Crittenton Home residents.
Photographs courtesy of Norm Fox and The Seattle Times.*

although the Seattle to Renton streetcar ran along the foot of the hill.

In 1926, a purpose-built brick structure replaced the outdated relic from the previous century. By 1967, after additions of a wing and four cottages, the home was capable of housing 80 young women at a time.

THE CRITTENTON GIRLS

Not all the residents of the Crittenton Home were pregnant. In the early days, the home became a convenient dumping ground for certain women who were draining the resources of the public hospitals and jails. Among these was **Jessie Newman**, born to a farming family in Ontario, Canada in 1871. During the 1890s, she worked as a domestic for a dry goods salesman in Detroit. The King County rolls record her death at Crittenton in May, 1903 with Bright's Disease as the cause, a failing of the kidneys.

One of the more unusual stories involving the Crittenton Home was that of **Kaoru Yamataya**, a 15-year old Japanese girl brought to this country in 1901. When her advanced pregnancy was discovered, Kaoru



was placed at the home while her immigration status was litigated. On September 24, 1901, she gave birth to a boy; sadly, the child died a few weeks later of pneumonia. Kaoru herself was deported a few years later, but not before her legal case made it all the way to the Supreme Court.**

In August 1902, Abraham Howard Hall, African-American porter, filed criminal charges against the pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Mack Scott, for impregnating his 14-year-old daughter, **Mary Hall**. Placed at Crittenton “in order to hide her downfall from her younger sisters,”² Mary died of convulsions shortly after giving birth in March 1903. Reverend Scott was convicted of rape and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor at Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, released on parole after two years.

Between 1902 and 1903 the *Seattle Daily Times* described “habitual drunkard” **Kitty Bird** as both “a pretty little thing” and “a notorious character of the underworld” as it serialized her interactions with local law enforcement. The *Seattle Star* accused her of causing police “a barrel

of trouble.”³ Facing a five-month sentence at the “comfortless” jail in June 1902, Kitty was offered an alternative: “nothing to do but sit in the shade of the trees and watch the gentle waves of Lake Washington”⁴—at Crittenton Home. But just the next morning she was seen by streetcar passengers hiking along the tracks heading back toward the city. Within weeks Kitty was returned to the custody of the jail on new charges of being “beastly drunk before morning.”⁵

As the century progressed, privacy became the prevailing currency for the Crittenton girls. Staff and the board worked hard to assure anonymity for their charges. Photographs in the post-war era picture the girls only from the back. Young women admitted to the home trended middle class, and adoption, a course of last resort in the early days, was considered “best for baby.”

The girls arrived with plenty of problems. Annual reports detail broken homes, sexual assault, severe emotional and behavioral problems, and many pregnancy complications. Fortunately, by this time, caseworkers were trained to deal with all such situations and



Weekly weigh-in, from Crittenton Annual Report



The Crittenton Home with women, girls and one man on the front porch in 1901. Photograph courtesy of Museum of History and Industry.

to connect girls with specialized community resources.

AN ABRUPT END

The shame of unwed motherhood was a constant through at least the 1950s. In the 1960s, views began to change as more professional women began to choose single motherhood and the availability of birth control, perversely, meant less sympathy for those who “chose” to become pregnant outside of marriage. Certainly, there was no dip in the number of unwed mothers, but the perception of need had changed.

Faced with mounting debts and the loss of their major funding source, the United Way, the home made the difficult decision to close early in 1973. After a new life as the Thunderbird Treatment Center for

substance abuse rehabilitation, the old Seattle Crittenton Home is currently shuttered and fenced, its ultimate fate uncertain. A petition for landmark status, filed in April 2020, was recently denied by the city landmarks board.

*For more on the Rapid Treatment Center, see <https://www.historylink.org/File/21066>

**For more on the Kaoru Yamataya case, see <https://historylink.org/File/20597>

¹ June Peterson, “The Florence Crittenton Home,” unpublished MS, 1964 UW Special Collections.

² *Seattle Republican*, March 13, 1903.

³ Kitty Bird’s Great Fault,” *Seattle Star*, April 28, 1902.

⁴ Kitty Will Not Stay Reformed,” *Seattle Daily News*, June 22, 1902.

⁵ “Kitty’s Liberty Was Short,” *Seattle Daily News*, August 8, 1902.

What's new in the Archives!

- Thank you Sheila Olsen for donating a scanned copy of Baist's Real Estate Map of Seattle Plate 32 of Rainier Beach.
- Thank you Diane Robinson for donating a 1953 guide of Seattle, a 1954 scrapbook of Franklin High School's Spades Club, a Bingo Bugle newspaper that mentions the Rainier Beach VFW, a Hillman City 1980s photo, war ration booklets and other memorabilia.
- Thank you Lynette Benaltabe for donating an advertisement from Bodiks IGA Market.
- Thank you Jan Kumasaka for donating two sets of getas, which were displayed for our Annual Meeting.
- Thank you Sachin Kukreja for donating the 1923 Mabel Hastings memorial stained glass window from The Abbey, formerly known as the Columbia Congregational Church.



"In memory of Mabel A. Hastings"

- Digital Collection update: visit our online access to 900 images at: rainiervalleyhistory.pastperfectonline.com
- Check us out on YouTube! Visit "RVHS Video" to view our growing list of shows including *This Old Kitchen*, *Dismantling Racism Series*, *Kubota Garden Virtual Walking Tour with Don Brooks*, *Comet Lodge Cemetery Tour*, *Seward Park Torii Story*, *Southend Connects* and more.

Mabel Hastings, Succumbs to Spanish flu, October 19, 1918

A young woman named Mabel Hastings of Columbia City died suddenly of influenza in 1918. Fast forward 102 years, an 8-foot tall "in memory of Mabel A. Hastings" stained glass window was donated to us during this pandemic. Here is Mabel's story.

Mabel Adeline Hastings was born August 30, 1890, in Iowa, firstborn to Harlow Harvey Amos and Minnie Hastings. The family moved to Rainier Valley the following year. In June of 1897, Mabel was baptized at First Congregational Church of Columbia City (later known as Columbia Congregational Church), where her parents were Charter members. Mabel graduated from Mills Seminary in Oakland, California, where she specialized in kindergarten teacher training work. She taught for two years at Snohomish County Orphanage in Everett. She was just entering her third year of kindergarten teaching at the Seattle Detention Home of the Juvenile Court, when her untimely death occurred. On October 11, 1918, Mabel returned home from work suffering what felt like a cold. The following week, "the grippe grew worse, but it was not until the 17th, that her physicians feared pneumonia and influenza." Mabel died two days later of the Spanish flu at the age of 28. "Funeral services were largely attended in spite of the ban on public gatherings." Over 100 flower arrangements were received at the Hastings family home. Mabel was survived by younger brother, Harlow H. Hastings, Jr., and her parents. Her youngest brother, Russell, died at age one to scarlet fever in 1901.



Mabel Hastings obituary, #1995.111.0005

Mabel's father, H.H.A. Hastings was a Trustee and Sunday School Superintendent for many years at Columbia Congregational, as well as practicing law attorney and serving as mayor of the Town of Columbia prior to Columbia's annexation to Seattle in 1907. Her mother, Minnie Hastings was a founder of the Ladies Aid of Columbia City, formed in 1892. The Hastings window completes our memorial window collection. 4 windows were dedicated to Sidney Burbank (1892-1917) Mabel Hastings (1890-1918) Mildred Weiss (1900-1926) and John A. Kelso (1850-1922).



Left image: Columbia Congregational Church at 39th Ave S and S Ferdinand Street, circa 1925. (RVHS photo). The church merged with neighboring Lakewood's congregation and sold the building to Allied8 in 2015. Right image: Allied8 The Abbey, apartments and retail space. (Allied8 website).

19 years ago, Buzz Anderson, founder of RVHS, acquired the records, artifacts and 9 stained glass windows from the first church built in Columbia City, Columbia Congregational. One memorial window remained in the building until this past year when it was removed due to building codes. Developer Sachin Kukreja of Allied8 donated the last memorial window to us. The church's facade has been maintained for 14 apartments and 2 retail spaces. The stained glass windows are beautifully restored from fundraising efforts. We plan to exhibit the Columbia Congregational records and stained glass windows when The Abbey opens.

Honor Roll

We thank our generous supporters for their donations received between May 1 and November 20, 2020!

*Please contact us with any corrections or omissions:
at 206-723-1663 or email office@rainiervalleyhistory.org.*

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Mort and Betty Taylor

Patron Membership

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Sponsor Membership

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Nancy Hevly
Tracey Lind
Joan Neville in memory of Mark
Hannum
Jean Sisson in memory of Tom Sisson

Gifts to Collections

King County 4Culture

Comet Lodge Cemetery Tour

Donations

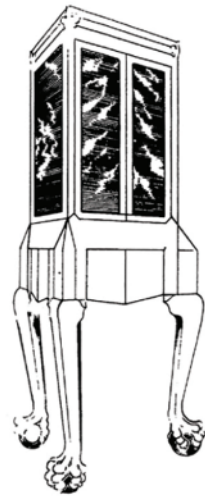
Theo Bickel
Billie Fortune
Dino Moreno
Lawrence Peryer
Robin Weller

Gifts to Uninvite Ask


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Marlene Taylor Houtchens
Beverly Huntington
Donna and Mike James
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Chuck & Chris Kusak
Tracey and Eric Lind
Jerry Mascio
Colleen Maloney
Judy McGough
Barb & Rudy Moeller
Rob Mohn & Shelley Morrison
Joan Neville

Gifts to Uninvite Ask (cont.)

Shirley Norris
Jeannie O'Brien
Karen O'Brien
Mary O'Brien
Gary Oppenheimer
Michelle Orsillo
Fred & Mariana Quarntstrom
Diane Rasmusson
Jerry Razwick, in honor of my uncle,
Buzz Anderson
Bonnie Riach
Thomas Riley
Yousef Shulman
Mark Sidran & Anais Winant
Sam & Jo Simone
Tommy Sivich
Ken Taggart
Lisa Ursino
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Rainier Valley Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret and share the history and heritage of Rainier Valley and its people and to engage public involvement in and appreciation of its diverse cultures. Our geographic boundaries are from Dearborn Street on the north to the city limits on the south, and from I-5 to Lake Washington.

RVHS Board of Directors

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New Seward Park Torii INSTALLED

For 50 years the entrance to Seward Park was distinguished by a 26-foot tall *torii*, a park icon of friendship between the Japanese Community and the City of Seattle. The original *torii* was dismantled due

to decay around 1985. During the 2011 Seward Park Centennial, a renewed interest in the *torii* took place between the Friends of Seward Park, neighbors, and the Seattle Cherry Blossom Committee. After 9 years of project planning, on Oct. 29th, the two 20-ton basalt *hashira* (columns) and the cedar *kasagi* (top lintel) were installed, and the *nuki* (crossbeam) was put in place on Nov. 9th. This legacy gift to Seward Park was



*Seward Park torii, 1935,
Seattle Municipal Archives*

made possible by over 200 individual donors, City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Parks Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, landscape architects, construction contractors, and countless Torii Committee volunteer hours. Its dedication will take place in a cultural celebration when we can gather again, hopefully during the 2021 cherry blossom season. For the complete *torii* history, watch the "Seward Park Torii Story" on our YouTube channel, RVHS Video.

