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### FEATURED HISTORY

## “You press the button, we do the rest” Amateur Photography of the Early 1900s

BY PATRICIA COSGROVE, MUSEUM DIRECTOR

While I am far from an expert in the history of photography, I do have a particular interest in early snapshots. These informal, often silly and spontaneous images were pretty much the opposite of the formal portraits that preceded them. Happily, the White River Valley Museum has an interesting collection of early snapshots.

Photography emerged in the early 19th century, but the technology was unwieldy, with large cameras that were mounted on tripods. The images were burned onto chemically treated paper or glass, and required skilled developing. Subjects had to pose indoors, staying still for 30+ seconds. Remaining immobile for that length of time required everyone to sit straight and hold a bland expression. Forget taking photographs of an activity, a squirmy baby or pet. Those were simply impossible. In fact, the earliest era of photography was ideally suited for memorializing loved ones who had passed away—a common practice of the era.



Frank Natsuhara documented school athletics for the Invader, the Auburn High School annual. This is the April 7, 1926 50 yard dash at Buckley.

*Continued on page 4*



## Women at Work

### Uniforms and Work Wear, 1910 to 2010

January 18 to June 18

Alice Miller, Guest Curator

Professional women of the early and mid-1900s followed dreams and necessity to pursue careers that were often outside the norm—and that came with a price. Held to different standards, which are especially easy to see in dress, women usually obliged and persevered.

The unique challenges faced by pioneering professional women become clear when you tour the exhibit *Women at Work*. Consider that Colonel Vera Jones, the highest ranking female Marine stationed in the jungles of Vietnam, was required to wear a girdle, hose and heels while her male counterparts wore fatigues. Each uniform on display brings with it the story of that profession and of the times—all told by *Women at Work*.



### LATE PLAY DATES

FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
6 - 8 P.M.

Bring the kids to the Museum for themed activities and crafts perfect for families and community groups with kids age 3 – 12. Free, no registration required.



### WINTER RAILROAD LECTURE WITH AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER MARTIN BURWASH

FEBRUARY 3  
MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE 6:30 – 7:30 P.M.  
LECTURE AND SLIDESHOW 7:30 – 10 P.M.

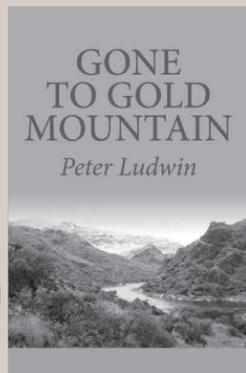


Join us for an evening of railroad history and reminiscing! \$5 adults, \$4 children and seniors, no registration required.

### POETRY READING WITH PETER LUDWIN AND WASHINGTON STATE POET LAUREATE TOD MARSHALL

FEBRUARY 23  
MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE 6 P.M.  
PROGRAM AT 7 P.M.

Ludwin will read from and sign his new book *Gone to Gold Mountain*, which tells in poetry the story of over thirty Chinese gold miners massacred in Hells Canyon on May 25, 1887 by a gang of Oregon horse thieves. He will be joined by Washington state poet laureate Tod Marshall who will read as well! \$5 adults, \$2 children and seniors, no registration required but space is limited.



### OVERNIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

MARCH 31, 7 P.M. – 8 A.M.

Kids ages 7 – 12 will love this activity packed overnight adventure in the Museum with games, scavenger hunts, crafts and more! \$30 per child, pre-registration required.

Register for Farm and Museum events online at [www.wrvmuseum.org](http://www.wrvmuseum.org) or call 253-288-7439.

## VOLUNTEER At the White River Valley Museum

Love history? Want to get involved with your community? Enjoy learning? Join our team of superstar Museum volunteers!

Museum volunteers can serve in a number of roles. Which one interests you?

- **Docent**, meet and greet Museum visitors, help them get the most out of their experience while learning all about the region's arts and history. Docents are asked to routinely work at least two, three-hour shifts a month.
- **Fieldtrip Tour Guide**, work with pre-arranged school tours delivering curricular based tours using prescribed lessons and techniques. Fieldtrip Tour Guides are trained to work on one or more of the four fieldtrip offerings, must enjoy working with young people, and are asked to lead or assist in at least two tours a month. Special Tour Guide training is offered each September and February.
- **Special Event Hosts**, volunteers that enjoy working with the public and children can sign-up to help lead family events, first Thursday Late Play Dates and festivals.



### Upcoming Volunteer Training!

Museum Fieldtrip Tour Guide Training and Info Session: February 21, 10 a.m. – noon



To R.S.V.P for these trainings or for more information contact Janet Wells at [jwells@auburnwa.gov](mailto:jwells@auburnwa.gov) or 253-804-5010.



*“You press the button, we do the rest”*  
**Amateur Photography of the Early 1900s**

BY PATRICIA COSGROVE, MUSEUM DIRECTOR

*Continued from page 1*



Young lady on dock with her 'folding pocket camera' c1912.

Then onto the scene comes George Eastman, who in 1888 introduced the Kodak #1 Camera. It was a small, handheld box which came pre-loaded with film. A complete amateur could take all 100 images and mail them back to Rochester, NY where workers developed the images and mailed them back with the reloaded camera. VOILA! Your memories could be snapped and preserved. All for the price of about \$25, roughly comparable to \$600 today—which enabled the upper middle income individual access to this wondrous new tool.

No longer were families required to get in their finest attire, go to town and stand ridged while a professional photographer recorded their posed portrait. The introduction of Eastman's Kodak #1 Camera was a transformative moment in history!

Following the Kodak #1 Camera, in 1900 Eastman Kodak released the first Brownie. This remarkably low cost alternative sold for about \$1. Frank Brownell designed this simple, cardboard box camera with a meniscus lens. It took 2.25 inch square images on 120 roll film. Kodak sold the film and kits for home processing. In its first year, Kodak shipped over 150,000 Brownie cameras. Around this same time Kodak introduced what they called the folding pocket camera, marketing it to women and children—heck anyone could do it! Measuring about 7 inches wide by 10 inches long and 1.5 inches deep, these cameras were not only easy to operate, they could hang from a woman's arm as easily as a handbag. Photos could be taken outdoors. They could record action. One could document your child's life in detail...they had found an almost endless market!

Within years of the Kodak's release, snapshot photography swept the nation. Photography clubs formed. People became 'camera fiends' or 'Kodakers.' Just ten years after the first Kodak was released (1888) it is estimated that over 1.5 million roll film cameras were being used by amateur photographers. Kodak continued to sell cameras inexpensively, making their profit from the large margins charged for consumables such as film, chemicals and paper.



These three action shots were taken by Frank Natsuhara of Henry Knickerbocker diving.

**Scrapbooks**

The word 'scrapbook' was coined in the early 1800s and was used to describe books individually filled with memorabilia, clippings and personal stories. My personal favorites are those which emerged with the advent of the snapshot. Usually filled with large sheets of black paper, within a leather binding, tied together by cord. Small photographs were mounted with corner holders or glue, and frequently the creator identified scenes and individuals in white handwritten captions. Some are simple and utilitarian in design, while other scrapbooks are works of art.

The images featured in this article are from the Museum's collection and are among my favorites. They all exemplify classic qualities of early snapshot being quick, casual, un-posed and often celebratory!

**Frank Natsuhara Album**

Auburnites may recall that Frank Natsuhara and his father before him operated a store on West Main Street, Natsuharas, then later Natsuhara & Son. In his young years Frank was a camera buff. He took photographs for the school paper and created beautiful albums of family and community photographs. Sadly, when the store burnt down in the 1990s, most of his scrapbooks were lost.



A full page from Frank Natsuhara's album showing family members all dressed up!



### Porter Family Album

The Porters lived on a farm near the confluence of the White and Green Rivers, where today there is a bridge at 104th and 8th Street NE. Many know of it as the 'Porter's Bridge'. Their album is my most favorite in our collection and dates from around 1915.



A rare action shot shows a dramatic scene! A team of harnessed workhorses are being driven by truck out of the flooded farmlands, with the Porter bridge in the background.

This Porter album snapshot shows young Eleanor Porter, her mother Elizabeth and family dog, with daughter-in-law Ruby and daughter Anne and a white kitten. Their family photos always show scenes that seem healthy and prosperous. The Porter Album is full of images of family members playing with animals or each other, and openly showing affection.

Emma Gus, a young Muckleshoot girl appears in many of the Porter Family Album photographs, especially with these two unidentified children.



### Fogelberg Family Album

Although torn and worn, the Fogelberg family album contains a large number of intimate, celebratory photos from c1912—most with casually written captions, right on the images.



One caption in the Fogelberg Family Album reads "home were we GOT the watermelons" and on a nearby page we see the results of that effort.





As with scrapbooks of today, the Fogelberg family album includes many images of vacations, including a series from the Hotel Hesperides at Titlow Beach in Tacoma. One wonders about this young man's intentions!

Marvin, Viola & Charlotte from the Fogelberg album.



Due to the need to hold still, photographing animals just didn't happen until the advent of the snapshot. One of the leading and very early farm families of the Slaughter/Auburn area, the Alvords, took this image of their cat. It is in the form of a magic lantern slide..



Elizabeth Heddle (holding puppy Kayo) and Lillian Atland pause from a day of picking raspberries for a quick photo opportunity. From the Spotts Family Album.

**Photographs of  
Pets and Livestock**



## Politics in the Kitchen

By Curator of Collections Hilary Pittenger



Women were the primary customers of grocery stores at the turn of the century, as seen by this crowd attending a sale at Hub Grocery in Auburn, c. 1900.

From *The Buckeye Cook Book* by Estelle W. Wilcox, published 1887: "The model house should not be large, nor too fine and pretentious for daily use. ... A great house, with its necessary retinue of servants, is not in keeping with the simplicity of a republic where trained servants are not known, and is seldom pleasant for the family or attractive to friends."

The use of servants in the home was a sticky proposition in the United States in the late 1800s. Slavery in the United States had only been abolished twenty-four years before this cookbook was published – many of the women reading it would have grown up in or around households which employed slave labor. Paid household service did not have the same stature in the United States as it did in European countries, and still carried with it the connotations of slavery. Moreover, it was argued in some quarters that use of household servants was unpatriotic in a Democratic Republic, especially for middle class women whose households were not so large as to absolutely necessitate additional help outside of female family members.

Female wage equality and working conditions were also discussed in early cookbooks. Wilcox wrote in her *Buckeye Cook Book* that "Perhaps the reason why girls prefer situations in stores, or shops, or even factories, to [professional] housework, is that their work there is confined to certain hours, after which they are free, and it is quite possible that an arrangement which would give the domestic certain hours of the day of her own, would work a reform; or still better, certain reasonable tasks might be allotted to her to do after which she would be free."

The Temperance movement had a direct and significant impact on cookbooks around the turn of the century. Almost overnight, cookbook authors had to decide their opinion on the use of alcohol, and adjust their recipes accordingly. The Temperance movement and the Women's Suffrage movement attracted many of the same proponents, so authors wishing to sell recipes to progressive female audiences tended toward the dry side of the argument, as in this excerpt from *Smiley's New and Complete Guide for Housekeepers*, published 1902:

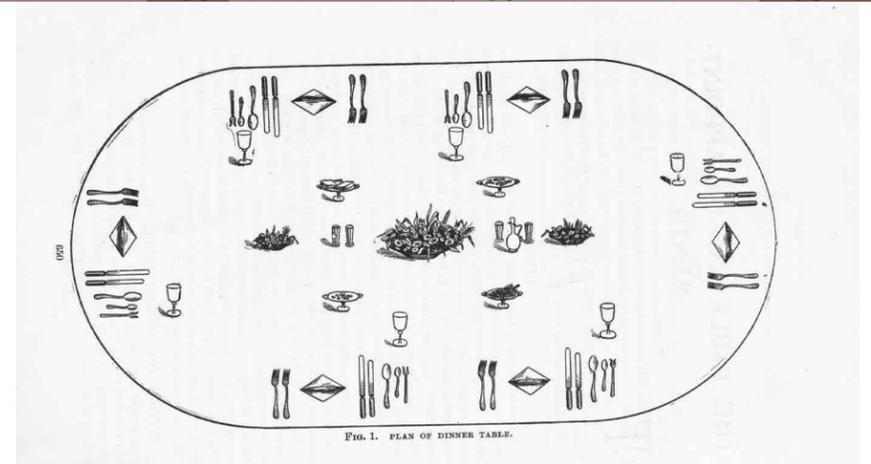


Illustration of an ideal supper table, according to Smiley's 1902 manual. Note the single water goblet at each place setting. The explanatory text reads: "Those who use wine glasses can add them, but we omit them because this is a Temperance work."

"In all recipes contained in the department of cookery, which advertised the use of intoxicating liquors, we have substituted fruit juices – often using orange or lemon juice. Nothing can excel the unfermented juices of fruits as a flavoring, or for giving a desirable piquancy to various dishes. They make an almost perfect substitute for liquors, and for obvious reasons are much safer for family use."

Both of these cookbooks, and many others, can be read in the Museum's Research Library.



Grocery stores like Moll's Grocery in Kent at the turn of the century began to sell exotic fruits like bananas and other imported goods. Image c. 1913.

# GOOD NEWS!

## Museum's 2016 Board of Directors ROCK!

The Museum Board of Directors President is **Mike Weibel**, Director of Human Services for the Auburn School District. Under his leadership this small but mighty group raised over \$19,000 at the recent Halloween Ball and shows enthusiasm for new challenges in 2017.

Community members that love the museum and farm serve on the board, many returning for repeat terms. Take Board Secretary **Ronnie Beyersdorf**-- he served six years in the early 2000's and returned to serve again. The 2016 board included a star group of community members: **Jeff Black**, Orion Industries; **Tim Carstens**, Auburn School District; **Ruby Elwood**, Umpqua Bank; **Bill Greene**, Reber Ranch; **Dave Larberg**, VRFA; **Doug Lein**, City of Auburn; **Joan Mason**, retired from GRC; **Kim Perry**, South Sound Insurance; **Bill Sundqvist**, retired Auburn Police Department; and **Jackie Swanson**, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe.

New directors will join the board in 2017, including, but not limited to **Jamie Bothell**, **Michelle Marshman** and **Gordy Nishimoto**, each a veteran member who served in past years. Thank you all for your dedication!





**White River Valley Historical Society**  
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Send us your email address to [arust@auburnwa.gov](mailto:arust@auburnwa.gov)  
 if you wish to receive our monthly e-newsletter, thanks!



**WOMEN AT WORK CURATOR TOUR**  
**FEBRUARY 11, TOURS AT 1 AND 2 P.M.**

See this new exhibit and hear fascinating insights and entertaining stories from exhibit curator and military uniform collector Alice Miller. Bring a friend and be inspired by stories of historic women's victories in life. Tour included with regular Museum admission or membership, no registration required but space is limited.



Guest Curator, Alice Miller

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 Museum Open: Noon to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday, 6 to 8 p.m. first Thursday and by appointment for group tours and research.  
 Admission: \$2 for children and seniors, \$5 for adults. Museum members free. First Thursday and third Sunday free.

