

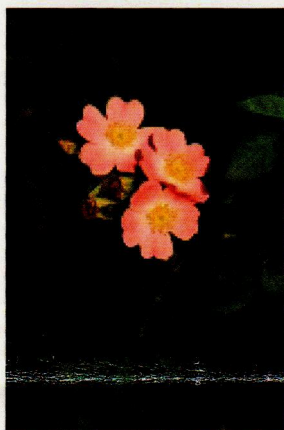
Footprints

on the sands of time...

ISSUE LXXV11 SOUTHWEST SEATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY & LOG HOUSE MUSEUM SPRING 2011

LOUISA DENNY'S SWEETBRIAR ROSE

A lesson in documenting history by Gaea Singer



The narrative of Seattle's "Sweetbriar Bride" was once well-known, but identification for the exact species of rose **Louisa Boren Denny** became associated with in Seattle's founding years remains elusive. Lack of documentation, and lack of historical appreciation until it was too late, are the two main culprits in the flower's identity crisis.

The sad result of no documentation is that we are left with a great story without a central character; the rose! Even though our city is young and the Sweetbriar Bride is a prominent founding family member, the account has faded from our collective memory and no longer holds community impact. Without tangible proof of the rose's existence the story's immediacy to our current generation is gone.

In fact, we do have a rose—just not proper proof for it. A 1928 time capsule, thought lost, was discovered by Seattle Center Opera House in 2002 during groundbreaking ceremonies for Macaw Hall. Inside the time capsule was a letter box with a rose on its cover and in the letter box were dried rose cuttings with canes, leaves, buds, hips, petals and seeds, since confirmed to be a sweetbriar rose—the stuff of Seattle's legend. The contents may be viewed at this site: http://www.historyink.com/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=3673

A typed letter taped to the bottom of the letter box describes in lovely detailed prose the Sweetbriar Bride Legend, from where the cuttings were taken (using current street names and "site of the original

Denny cabin"), and the circumstances under which he or she took the cuttings. No date or donor name are on the note. The Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) received the time capsule by donation from Seattle Center Opera House, and Registrar **Kristen Halunen** says this "transcribed" note describing the contents came with it: 'Plant came from the site of Denny cabin.'

Achingly close to an identification! **Margaret Nelson** is President of Heritage Roses Northwest and handled the letterbox rose, confirming it as a sweetbriar. She says even with a rose in hand, that still leaves us with improper documentation. Which Denny cabin? There were many, and **Louisa** is recorded to have planted flowers at every one she lived in, even if only for a short while. When was this rose cut? Had it been crossbred by nature? Who donated the flower? Was this person a reliable witness? Incomplete documentation; don't let it happen to your heirs!

This is the Legend of the Sweetbriar Bride: As young **Louisa Boren** said goodbye to her best friend, **Pamelia Dunlap**, the two wept at the prospect of never seeing each other again. They swore that nothing would part their friendship—not thousands of miles of Oregon Trail, nor the Rocky Mountains of the Great Continental Divide, not a continent; not even time.

What's Inside?

Sweetbriar Rose	1 TOWS donors	5
Sweetbriar Rose (con't)	2 MM Report/"Save Date"	6
Collections, HS Award	3 Reports/Ron Richardson	7
TPI-Bentley/Vandenberg	4 Calendar	8

FOOTPRINTS

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Saturday & Sunday

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LOUISA DENNY'S SWEETBRIAR ROSE (continued from page 1)

Louisa collected some seeds from the Sweetbriar Rose in Pamela's garden in Cherry Grove, Illinois. She promised Pamela that they would be planted in her new home out west, and become a living token of their friendship.

Louisa kept her promise. The seeds of that rose bush were carried across the trail in 1851. She became Seattle's first bride in January 1853 (married by Doc Maynard to David Denny) and planted the seeds that spring outside her cabin door on what is now known as Denny Way, where the plant flourished in the temperate, fertile, Pacific Northwest. Louisa became known as the "Sweetbriar Bride."

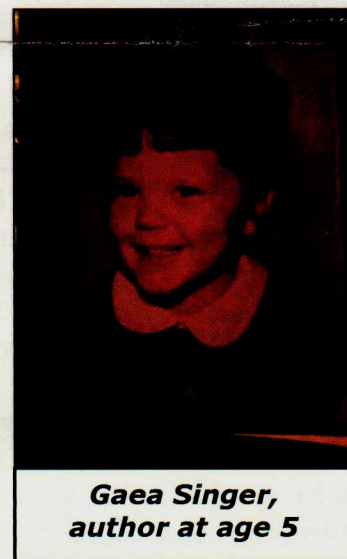
Denny's great-grandniece, Roberta Frye Watt in "Four Wagons West" says the original rose bush continued for 77 years until "the last trace of it was uprooted by the jaws of a steam shovel" (p. 93) circa 1930. Popular opinion has long tagged Rosa Rubiginosa, a.k.a. Rosa Eglanteria as Louisa's flower, commonly known as the Sweetbriar Rose. Thorny, beautiful, fragrant in all kinds of weather, and highly resistant to disease and pests, this antique rose is tantalizingly the very species found in the time capsule's 1928 letter box. And it would still have been alive at the time capsule's sealing.

Take a lesson from Louisa Denny's Sweetbriar Rose, which has lessening impact with subsequent generations. Do you have a family artifact, photo, news clipping, or oral tradition? Is it properly recorded? Genealogies are meaningless lists of names without

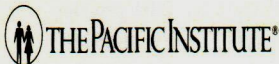
the stories, faces, and places that go with them. Don't let improper documentation leave your heirs with holes in their stories, with lost, misplaced, or damage possessions, or worse, owning "old stuff" or "junk" not attached to any stories at all.

All items require proper identification. Record what the item is, its condition, who possesses it now, and if there are any stories about the item. Be sure to include both who told the story and who recorded the story, and all dates related to the history of the item. List corroborating witnesses, and make duplicate copies of your records. Then research the best way to store your items. Museum staff will be glad to help you with this process.

Gaea Singer



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THE LOG HOUSE MUSEUM IS
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SWSHS NAMED HISTORIC SEATTLE'S PRESERVATION HERO FOR 2010

"The SWSHS has been the grassroots, preservation organization leading local efforts to advocate for the protection, preservation and restoration of the historic Fir Lodge/Alki Homestead. Through the leadership of its staff, key board members and dedicated volunteers, the Society helped to galvanize the West Seattle community to come together to say "This Place Matters" culminating in a photo event and rally drawing about 200 people in front of the building on July 4, 2010. The organization continues to advocate for the Alki Homestead until it is restored and reopened for business. Constant vigilance! This makes the Southwest Seattle Historical Society a Preservation Hero!"

COLLECTIONS REPORT

This commemorative plate honoring **David Denny** and **Louisa Boren's** marriage is in the Log House Museum collection. Sweetbriar roses were used as a border on the plate rim with Mt. Rainier in the background and **David** and **Louisa** on their bridal journey pictured in a canoe on Elliott Bay in the foreground

Sarah Frederick



China plate with sweetbriar roses as a border, titled "The bridal journey of the first bride in Seattle" depicting **David Denny** and **Louisa Boren** FIC2005.38

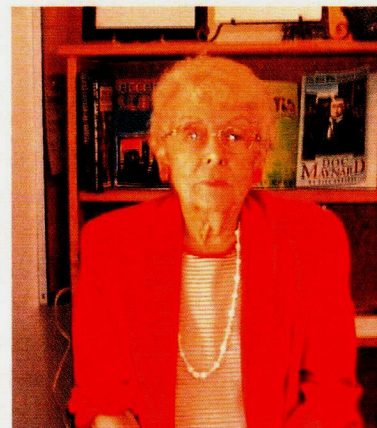
JOYCE ANDERSON, GIFT SHOP CLERK

The museum staff and executive board were saddened to learn of the passing of long-time gift shop clerk, **Joyce Anderson**.

Joyce had been an Alki resident for many years who thoroughly enjoyed her part-time post retirement position in the LHM gift shop. She greeted visitors and tour groups with enthusiasm and took great pride in her work. **Joyce** always enjoyed chatting with customers and encouraged interest in local history.

Joyce was a strong supporter of the museum & society mission. She will be missed.

Carol Vincent



Joyce Anderson
12/16/31- 11/16/10

GIFT SHOP BEST BUYS FOR SPRING

Perfect for keeping warm on those cool spring nights, a Log House Museum fleece jacket! Available in two styles, full zip with hood or pullover with a mock neck in several different colors. Docent **Pam Thomas** loved this one so much that she purchased it on the spot! Available now, only in the Log House Museum's gift shop for \$29.95!

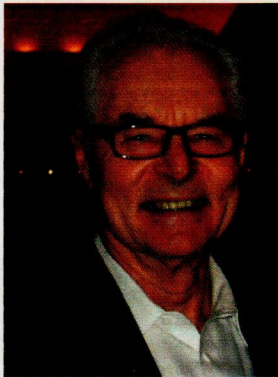
Also, recently back in stock: "The Fauntleroy Story: 100 years of community" DVD, \$10

Don't forget to mention that you are a SWSHS member to receive 10% off any gift shop purchase.



Docent Pam Thomas

**TPI EVENT FEATURES "HIKING WASHINGTON'S HISTORY" BY AUTHOR, JUDY BENTLEY.
KEYNOTE SPEAKER JERRY VANDENBERG, SHARES DUWAMISH RIVER TRAIL HISTORY**



Jerry Vandenberg

The water and land of the Duwamish Peninsula were the focus of a fundraising event at The Pacific Institute on January 27. The evening featured a book talk by past president **Judy Bentley**, from *Hiking Washington's History*, published by the University of Washington Press. Personal reminiscences by Advisory Council member **Jerry Vandenberg**

and Board member **Clay Eals** deepened her comments on the Duwamish River Trail.

"When I was a boy growing up on the Duwamish in the 40s and early 50s, the river was our playground. Every summer, we could be found fishing from docks filled with purse seiners, gill netters and trawlers or fishing in the river from a borrowed rowboat," **Vandenberg** recalled. "The boats at the docks were owned by our Croatian neighbors and represented the livelihoods for ten or fifteen families."

"In the late summer and fall, the river bubbled with salmon so thick that you felt you could walk across it. Fall was filled with the smell of community fish fries and the smell of grapes sitting at the street side, waiting to be turned into vino. Life was good!" But in the river, two very big secrets were unfolding a disaster.

The first secret was not a secret to us kids. A day not shared with our parents was on low tide days. We made our way to the sewage outfall under the Spokane Street Bridge and watched the wastewater of West Seattle flow directly into the Duwamish. The second secret was the chemical laden outfalls into the river below the 14th St. Bridge at South Park. Industrial waste, exploded by World War II B-17 production at Boeing's Plant 2, was slowly poisoning the life out of our river. By the late 50's, the fish in the river had dwindled to the point that almost all commercial salmon fishing was prohibited "inside." The fishermen moved their boats to Anacortes to be closer to the "outside fishing grounds" in the straits. By the

middle 70's, overfishing, pollution, and the **Boldt** decision had put most of the commercial fishermen out of business on the inland waters. The 70's also brought Forward Thrust and Metro and an effort to treat our sewage before we put it in our waters. This effort is yet to be completed, but completion is "near." The 70's also brought an awareness of the price we were paying for disposing our chemical waste into our waters. We began a four-decade effort to stop the practice. In the 90's we began the process of cleaning up 80 years of soil poisoning on the banks of the Duwamish. We began with the Superfund sites on Harbor Island and we are continuing today with the plan to cleanse the soil at Plant 2 and turn it into salmon habitat.

This is a West Seattle story — of self-inflicted economic and cultural consequences. It's a story of how we screwed up! It's also a story of redemption and atonement, a story we are proud to tell our children. We screwed up, and we are trying to fix it." **Vandenberg** suggested that the historical society's mission begins and ends as a cultural bank that collects and saves stories like this. "We can then use these stories to help us become a better community."

Clay Eals took listeners on a hike around the Duwamish Peninsula with his mother. He talked of her Saturday afternoon walks — out the door of her home to Fairmount Gulch, across a rickety footbridge, down Fairmount to Harbor Avenue, then along the beach to Duwamish Head, around Duwamish Head and along the Alki Beach all the way to the lighthouse, then down Beach Drive, sometimes on the beach, to Lincoln Park, all the way through Lincoln Park around the bend to the south end, then back up along Fauntleroy Way and California Avenue, back home as evening settled in.

In honor of his mother **Virginia's** hike, **Meg and Clay Eals** announced a donation of \$5000 to the society and Log House Museum, doubling a donation they made at the Halloween Brunch in October. Those in attendance in October matched the \$5000 with pledges and donations, and those attending in January contributed another \$3000. Our goal is to raise another \$2000 by May 1.

Judy Bentley

TOWS CAMPAIGN DONORS

As of February, 2011, more than \$35,000 has been pledged to the Telling Our Westside Stories campaign. Our goal is \$150,000. Tell someone new about the campaign today.

\$10,000 and above

Clay & Meg Eals

\$2,000-9,999

**Alan & Jennifer Peterson
Joan Stover**

\$1500-1999

**Judy & Al Bentley
Lou & Diane Tice/
The Pacific Institute**

\$1000-1499

**Peggy Cullor
Sharon Huling
Ruth & Wayne Moore
Dr. Virginia Stimpson
Elaine Townsend
Jerry Vandenberg
Carol & Charlie Vincent**

\$500-999

**Gayle Anderson
John Bennett
Earl & Adah Cruzen
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Tia Hallberg
Marcy Johnsen
Andrew Nelson
Michael Purdy
Ron & Sherry Richardson
Bob & Rita Yeasting
Juda Youngstrom & Pete Covell**

\$250-499

**Ronald Champoux
Ann & Gary Dawson
Marty & Ann Dirks
Queen Julia Johnson
Donald Kelstrom
Flora Belle Key
Candace Lein-Hayes**

\$150-499 (continued)

**Andrea Mercado
Oscar Mraz
Joan Bailey Mraz
Judy Pickens
Mike Sweeney
Jerry Williams
Audrey Zemke**

\$100-249

**Harry & Edith Beasley
Boeing Company
Kay Francisco
Alyson Hallberg
Nancy Hallberg
Verda Hansberry
Clarissa Holn
Alan Mendelssohn
Heidi Mercado
Kat Overton
Phillip Peterson
Jackie Standley Scott**

\$20-99

**Cal Bannon
Brandie Thompson Carlson
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Michael D'Annunzio
Amy Lee Derenthal
Lisa Fischer
Kermit Franks
Doris Hixon
Kerry Korsgaard
Don & Eleanor Laxdall
Flo Lentz
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Gael Treesiwin
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Thank you KOMO and Rose Egge!

Check out this website

<http://westseattle.komonews.com/news/history>

Images and memoirs of West Side history

Updated bi-monthly

MUSEUM MANAGER'S REPORT

It has been an interesting couple of months at the Log House Museum. I have been working with researchers on topics like the history of Riverside, the Fir Lodge, and Luna Park. **Dayle Banks**, archivist at the Alki Congregational Church, continues to drop by with new and exciting finds from the church archives. **Pauline Couch**, who lives in the Admiral District and grew up on Alki, was kind enough to stop by the museum and allow us to scan photos from her personal collection, including many class photos from Alki Elementary.

Spring is coming and so are the school children! Many teachers bring their classes back year after year for our guided tours. If you know any teachers looking for field trip destinations, send them our way. In addition to collections work, research and tour preparations, there are still grants to write, computers to fix and thank you letters to send! Paid staff hours at the museum are usually doubled every week with the help of all of our great volunteers.

The museum is lucky to be operating with such a great team of volunteers this winter. It definitely makes my job easier! Volunteer Coordinator in-training **Isabela Iovanel** has jumped in feet first, while still docenting at the museum. **Gaea Singer, Pam Thomas, Alyson Deans**, and **Bob Bollen** have been helping out as docents on Thursdays and Fridays. If you haven't met them yet, stop by the museum and say hello! **Sarah Baylinson** has been hard at work, re-vamping our traveling heritage trunks and working on a new interpretative program. Be on the lookout for them this spring. **Brandie Thompson-Carlson**, collections volunteer extraordinaire, continues cataloging the seeming endless collection from **Lucille Mason's** photography studio. There are some gems in there. We try to post some of the interesting finds to our Facebook and blog (www.loghousemuseum.blogspot.com).

2011 is going to be a great year. Stop in and see what's new!

Sarah Fredrick



For more information about this & other events please call the museum at 206-938-5293 or check out our website www.loghousemuseum.info

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We would like to welcome two new members, **John Zitkovich** and **Isabela Iovanel**. We would also like to thank **Martha Beard**, **John Bennett**, **Betty Rue Kreitinger** and **Don Kelstrom** for increasing their membership levels!

Your dues make a big difference. Without them we could not run our events, process our collections, or keep the lights on!

BUSINESS MEMBERS

John Bennett Properties
Leavengood Architects
David Kehle, Architect
Tom's Automotive
Jackson, Morgan & Hunt PLLC
The Pacific Institute
WS Chamber of Commerce

IN MEMORIAM

Donations in memory of

RON RICHARDSON

Barbara Benish
Al & Judy Bentley
Ann & Gary Dawson
May Shimbo
Michael Jones
Sue Stone
Ken Turner
Carol Vincent
Audrey Zemke

Catherine Carpenter, in honor of **Larry Carpenter**

DONATIONS

Betty Dolan, **Cal Bannon**, **Kermit Franks**, **Patricia Jones**, **David Keith**, **Barbara Olson**, **Lisa Fischer**, **The United Way**, **Michael D'Annunzio**, **Alyson Hallberg**, **Carolyn Matthews**, **Kay Francisco**, **Amy Lee Derenthal**, **Holly Silver**, **Mary Lou Richardson**, **Patricia Wright**, **Marcy Johnsen**, **Mike Sweeney**, **Clarissa Holn**, **Joan Stover**, **Jerry Vandenberg**, **Harry and Edith Beasley**, **William and Wanda Carney**, **The Mark R. and Rae N. Lembersky Charitable Fund**, **Klarinell Jung**, **Ruth and Wayne Moore**, **Alan and Jennifer Peterson**, **The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**, **Clay Eals**

RON RICHARDSON, 75, TEACHER, WRITER, LOVER OF HISTORY

For **Ron Richardson**, board membership was an extension of his neighborhood activism. He attended the Southwest District Council meetings. He was an advocate for historical preservation, attending meetings of the Southwest Design Review Board as it considered an expansion of The Kenney. He was an advocate for the preservation of the Alki Homestead/Fir Lodge. He worked on the Feet First kiosks. He kept showing up. He talked to people, conveying the importance of places.

Ron's love of history was best revealed on his popular walking tours. A walking tour with Ron meant meeting people in the neighborhoods and hearing their stories. On the Fauntleroy tour, the group stopped on the front porch with **Morey Skaret** to hear his 90 plus years of neighborhood history. We talked with **Judy Pickens** at Fauntleroy Creek, with **David Kratz** at Fauntleroy Church, with **Jack Pierce** at his Lauretide home. On the White Center tour, **Ron** led us to the Café Rozella, to the Greenbridge housing community.

Ron wrote about people, for History Link, for the Log House Museum website, for the West Seattle Blog. He wrote about **Skaret's** mission to return a Japanese war flag to the family of the soldier who had carried it; he wrote an homage to **Emma Harman**, who was elected to the Washington legislature in the 1930's. After any community meeting, his comment was often the first to appear on the blog, and it was always positive, in a "let's carry this forward" mode. He valued gatherings of people, at the Original Bakery in Fauntleroy, of his Garfield buddies at the Attic Tavern in Madison Park.

He began as a history teacher and never lost that mission. He knew that history is not theoretical, not distant. It's right now, where you are standing, and he could tell you why you should care. So, Ron, we'll miss your kind and gentle spirit, and we'll miss your stories, and we wish you had been a more elder community elder, but you're now part of the pantheon of local history and we won't forget. *Judy Bentley*

FOOTPRINTS

Newsletter of the Southwest Seattle Historical Society
& "Birthplace of Seattle" Log House Museum
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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Thurs, April 14	Historic Hood Hunt (see page 6)
Tues, April 19	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Tues, May 17	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Tues, June 21	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Sat, June 25	Alki Bike Tour
Mon, July 4	Annual member Picnic Log House Museum Courtyard
Sat/Sun, July 23-24	Alki Art Fest
Tues, July 19	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Tues, August 16	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Tues, Sept 20	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Tues, Oct 18	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Sat, Oct 22	GALA- SAVE the Date!
November 12 or 13	Annual meeting; Saturday or Sunday: Anniversary LHM opening and landing of Seattle founding families
Tues, Nov 15	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room
Tues, Dec 20	SWSHS Board meeting at SSCC President's Board Room