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Many thanks to the individuals and businesses who help make this event possible:

- Holly’s Flowers And…
- Romanza Gifts and Home Decor
- Colby Kuschatka
- Kmart
- Girl Scouts Troop #352

* Photographs taken by the museum will cost $10.00 for two 5 X 7s, or you may bring your camera and take your own photograph.

Visit us online at www.kirkmanhousemuseum.com.
Mrs. Kirkman’s Irish Roots

By Charles Harley

In which Mr. Harley continues to illuminate the reader as to his visit to Isabella Potts Kirkman’s homeland, and the discoveries made on said journey…

Supporting the Museum

The Kirkman House is committed to preserving our past and providing a setting for understanding our local history. There are many ways you can help with the preservation and education efforts that take place in the museum. Your support is what makes great things happen at the Kirkman House!

Become a museum member

Members’ benefits include a subscription to the museum’s quarterly newsletter, advance notice of events, and invitations to “Members Only” events. Membership dues help pay for special exhibits and programs at the museum that enhance the cultural spirit of our community.

Join the Bricks and Mortar Society

These generous members commit to donating $200 or more a year for three years to ensure the restoration and preservation work at the museum continues.

Include the Kirkman House Museum in your planned giving

From its origin as a museum in 1978, the Kirkman House has preserved an important piece of Walla Walla’s architectural and cultural heritage. Today, the museum continues to provide education about daily family life in Victorian-era Walla Walla. A gift to the Kirkman House Museum’s endowment fund is an investment in the cultural heritage of our valley. It supports ongoing restoration, strengthens our programs, and provides financial security for the future.

Support the annual fund

Contributions to the annual fund, during the fall phonathon or at any time of year, provide important support for the care and maintenance of the museum, the conservation of our collections and our ability to continue funding full-time staffing.

Volunteer

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Donate in-kind

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Prince Albert made the Christmas tree, a traditional decoration in his native Germany, a popular addition to the holidays in Britain when he brought one into Windsor Castle in the 1840s. And the first Christmas cards were sent following the introduction of the “Penny Post” in Britain in 1840, whereby a letter or card could be posted to anywhere in that country for the price of a penny stamp.

Santa Claus, so familiar to many American families, came to our shores with Dutch Settlers in the 17th century. The idea of a jolly old fellow distributing gifts via a sleigh and reindeer appealed to the British, who had Father Christmas, originally a member of the old British, who had Father Christmas, sleigh and reindeer appealed to the old fellow distributing gifts via a

The evidence suggests that George, Isabella’s elder brother and, according to available records, the one son of the family, was at best semiliterate. As the bearer of the news of his father’s death to the registrar for the district of Ballybay, it fell to George to sign the death registration certificate. His name in the box on the certificate, reserved for the informant’s signature, is, however, plainly written by the assistant registrar; whose longhand also fills the certificate’s 10 other information boxes.

Eleven years after his father’s demise, George had to inform the registrar of another death in the family, this time of his spinster sister, Sarah. On her death certificate George attests that he was present when Sarah died at the farm at Drumgrole. In the box for the informant’s signature, the name George Potts is again in the registrar’s hand. Between ‘George’ and ‘Potts’ comes a handwritten ‘X’. Next to that ‘X’ the registrar has appended, ‘His mark’.

We don’t know the year of his birth, but in all probability George Potts was born late enough to be a potential beneficiary of Ireland’s National Schools system, created in 1831 to provide the poor and less well-off with the rudiments of an education. Maybe George passed through a few of the earliest grades. If, though, he was the sole boy in the Robert Potts household, he more likely spent what ought to have been his school years helping his father on their tenant holding of—according to the 1861 Griffith Valuation, a land survey executed for the purpose of assessing tax—fourteen and one sixteenth acres, the proceeds from which were required to support a family eight or nine strong.

As girls in a household of modest means, Isabella and her sisters would almost certainly not have attended school. They would either have stayed home to help their mother or entered domestic service. From his photograph, Mr. Robert Potts was a proud man, and the family enjoyed a reputation for thrift, so perhaps it was with savings from the income from the farm, rather than from a slavey’s pittance that, in 1863, Isabella paid her passage to America.

(To be continued in the Spring 2007 newsletter)

---Family photographs courtesy of Jim Reynolds

Agnes Potts, née Evans, Isabella’s mother. Judging from the backdrop, the photograph was taken in the same studio as that of her husband, presumably on the same occasion.

Studio photograph of Robert Potts, Isabellla’s father. The date of the photograph is unknown. Judging from the style of dress, it was probably taken 1855-65.

Cottages Come Crashing Down

After months of planning and preparation, the Kirkman House Museum finally completed an important phase of the Exterior Improvement Project on October 20. In the span of four hours, two cottages on the museum’s property were removed. The cottages, brought on to the grounds in the 1940s to be used as rentals, had deteriorated over the years beyond the point of reasonably saving. Their presence was a distraction on the property, and their removal increases the usable recreational space on the property.

The museum is grateful to Dennis and Christine Gisi and the Clara and Art Bald Trust for funding this important work.

Kirkman House News

The museum is grateful to George T. Welch Trust for a $2,000 grant to help fund exterior improvements. Improving the aesthetic appeal of the museum and its grounds helps strengthen its position as a cultural cornerstone of downtown Walla Walla.

The museum appreciates the support of our community partners in creating a better future by preserving our past.

Visit the Museum

Museum hours

Wednesday - Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Sundays, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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(To be continued in the Spring 2007 newsletter)
PART II

Mrs. Kirkman’s Irish Roots

BY CHARLES HARLEY

In which Mr. Harley continues to illuminate the reader as to his visit to Isabella Potts Kirkman’s homeland, and the discoveries made on said journey…

After viewing what remains of Isabella Potts Kirkman’s childhood home at Drumgore and visiting her parents’ grave in a churchyard in the nearby town of Ballybay, I called on Peadar Murnane, by avocation historian of the town and its surroundings, at his home on Ballybay’s Main Street.

I told Peadar of my mild surprise that Isabella’s parents’ ages at death were given on their gravestone as 96, Robert, and 95, his widow, Agnes. I read my host the entry from William H. Kirkman’s Journal of Summer Travel for 12 July, 1892: ‘Found the old couple looking very well, especially Grandmother, who is for one of her age (96) quite active. Grandfather not being so able to move about without assistance but still quite bright though 98 years of age.’

Peadar fished from the sea of papers that laps his office a photocopy of old Robert’s death certificate, which gives his age on death, 9 January 1894, 98 months after his grandson’s visit, as 98…still.

Gaps, errors and discrepancies in the vital statistics of those times were inevitable, Peadar said, given widespread illiteracy and poverty, and the paucity of official records—the Irish census not being authoritative but still quite bright though 98 years of age.”

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To have the amount of your purchase applied to our rewards account, just give your cash to the Kirkman House phone number (529-4373) when you check out.

Contact Kirsten at 529-4373 or by email at kkhm@kirkmanhousemuseum.org if you are interested in more information on ways you can partner with the Kirkman House Museum.

2006 Kirkman House Members

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Melton & Betty (Kirkman) Jacobs Rose Anne Walker
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Fred & Sally Koonsley Hank & Catherine Worden
Limea Kratts Jill Zagarov
Bill Kent Bill & Jan Zagarov

Studio photograph of Isabella Potts taken in San Francisco, California, 1866, the year after her arrival in the United States.

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