



Kirkman

W I N T E R 2 0 0 6

H O U S E N E W S

Letter from the President

Well it's been fun—and rewarding, challenging, educational, and lots of other things, too. In the past two years, the Kirkman House Museum has grown by leaps and bounds. Thanks to the gifted consultation of Peggy Sanderson, the generosity and foresight of the Sherwood Trust, the dedication and skill of Kirsten Schober, the hard work of our board of directors and the support of our community, this museum is the strongest it's ever been.

It's been an honor to serve as president during this exciting time, and I'm looking forward to staying involved in other roles, and seeing where the future leads. Mostly, I'm grateful to everyone who's given their time, attention, energy, support and talents to this unique and irreplaceable museum, and proud to be able to say that I helped.

Thank you.

Jennifer

A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

Deck the Halls at The Kirkman House

*A Merry Christmas
TO YOU.*

On December 2 from 1 to 4 p.m. the Kirkman House will open its doors to welcome the holiday season. An annual tradition, the Victorian Christmas features music, story-telling, Saint Nicholas and Christmas treats.

Stop by to have your child's photo taken with Saint Nick*, hear the Living History Company tell tales of Christmas past and get your fill of goodies before the 11th Annual Macy's Holiday Parade of Lights, at 6 p.m. on Main Street.

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.

2006 Kirkman House Members

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Punkey Adams | William G. Kirkman |
| Tim Barry | Mary Koch |
| Douglas Bayne | Delmer J. Kopf |
| Gayle Bingham | Judith Krein |
| Jeff Blum | Donna Le Fore |
| Howard Boggs & Linda Kastning | Tam Lennox |
| | W. Barbara Lloid |
| Wendye Bren | Galen McQuarrie |
| Sandie Burt | Karen Ross Morton |
| Ken Butler | Laura Mulcahy |
| Jon & Mary Campbell | Marilyn Noble |
| Sandra Cannon | James Payne |
| David & Lou Ann Casper | Alan & Missy Peterson |
| Charles & Marilyn Clizer | Richard & Debra Jo Pine |
| Colonial Motel | Jon & Jennifer Rickard |
| Peter & Karen Dahlquist | Winnifred M Ringhoffer |
| Gretchen de Grasse | E. Jane Rizer |
| Leo Doyle | Susan Roberts |
| Karen Dunn | Judy Rostollan |
| George Edwards | George & Margaret Sampson |
| Dana B. Fisher | Martha P. Schilling |
| Jeana Garske | Diana Schmidt |
| Dee Lee Gibson | Ed & Helen Logan Schneider |
| Linda Gifford | Laura Schulz |
| Mike & Sue Gillespie | Ned Shafer |
| Dennis & Chris Gisi | Larry & Claire Siegel |
| Bettie Groetsema | Bonny R. Struthers |
| Ellen & Charles Harley | Mark, Mikaelyn & Kallisti Swayne |
| Joan Potts Helm | |
| Mary Jane Hendricks | Susan Swayne |
| Nan & Charles Hopson | John & Nanci Crowley |
| Peggy Hoyt | Thorsnes |
| Michael Humphreys | Richard & Carolyn Tuttle |
| Hal & Cora Dee Hunt | Rick & Patti Tuttle |
| Jim Irwin | Ruth Kirkman Tyler |
| Melvin & Betty (Kirkman) Jacobs | Bill & Maureen Vollendorff |
| | Rose Anne Walker |
| Judy Jurgensen | Dianna Woolley |
| Fred & Sally Kearsley | Hank & Catherine Worden |
| Linnea Keatts | Jill Zagelow |
| Bill Keith | Bill & Jan Zuger |

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 Drumgrole 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 surrounds, 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, 18 months after his grandson's visit, as 98...still.



❖ *Studio photograph of Isabella Potts taken in San Francisco, California, 1864, the year after her arrival in the United States.*

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 established till 1821, and the national register of “hatches, matches and dispatches” not till 1864.

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 Valuations, 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



❖ *Agnes Potts, nee 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, Isabella's father. The date of the photograph is unknown. Judging from the style of dress, it was probably taken 1855-65.*

—Family photographs courtesy of Jim Reynolds

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

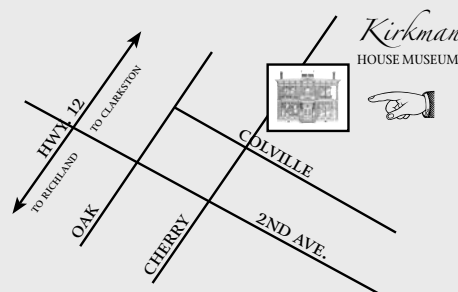
savings from the income from the farm, rather than from a slave's pittance that, in 1863, Isabella paid her passage to America.

(To be continued in the Spring 2007 newsletter)

Visit the Museum

Museum hours

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



Christmas as we Know It...

Many of the Christmas traditions we delight in today were started in Great Britain during the Victorian era. The industrial revolution increased the amount of disposable income for middle-class families, and mass production meant that material goods formerly limited to the very wealthy were now affordable for middle-class families. Even the poor benefited on a limited scale; novel social ideas, found in Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" (1843) and Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Seller" (1846) encouraged charitable giving to the less fortunate.

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 shore 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 English midwinter festival whose appearance in green robes was seen as a sign of the returning spring. Now both gentlemen can be found at Christmas festivals in England's cities and towns.



Kirkman House News

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.

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Museum Receives Local Grants

The Kirkman House Museum recently received a \$1,500 grant from the Blue Mountain Community Foundation to help fund 2007 operations. This grant will help finance two new exhibits in 2007.

The museum is also grateful to the 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.

Supporting the Museum

The Kirkman House Museum 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 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 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

Whether by leading tours, assisting with collection management and exhibits, helping at our special events or providing support behind the scenes, our volunteers' service helps ensure the Kirkman House Museum functions smoothly. Volunteers serve on a weekly, monthly or as-needed basis.



Donate in-kind

items or services

Contributions of material goods or professional services help reduce the operating costs of the museum.

Help us earn rewards at Staples

Any time you spend money at Staples, the amount of your purchase can be applied to the Kirkman House rewards account, which provides us with credits we can use to buy office supplies. To have the amount of your purchase applied to our rewards account, just give your cashier the Kirkman House phone number (529-4373) when you check out.

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

Kirkman House 2006 Board of Directors

Jennifer Rickard, Board President
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Special Thanks to our 2006 Major Sponsors

Blue Mountain Community Foundation
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E. Jane Rizer
Donald and Virginia Sherwood Trust
George T. Welch Testamentary Trust
Bill and Maureen Vollendorff

Kirkman

HOUSE NEWS



WINTER 2006

Museum hours

Wednesday - Saturday,

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sundays, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Our mission

The mission of the Kirkman House Museum is to enrich the cultural heritage of Walla Walla by preserving the Kirkman family home, sharing its history and educating our community and visitors about domestic life in Victorian-era Walla Walla.

Become a Kirkman House Museum member

Your membership helps maintain the museum and in return you get these benefits!

- ☐ Free admission to the Kirkman House Museum.
- ☐ Four issues of the quarterly newsletter.
- ☐ Advance notice for Kirkman House events.
- ☐ Invitation to "Members Only" events.
- ☐ Recognition in the Kirkman House newsletter.
- ☐ Tax deductible contribution.
- ☐ Knowledge that you are helping to save the Kirkman House for future generations.

2006 KIRKMAN HOUSE MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State ZIP: _____

E-mail: _____

- ☐ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.
- ☐ I would prefer not to have my name listed in museum publications.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

- ☐ Students and Seniors (\$15)
- ☐ Individual (\$25)
- ☐ Friend (\$250)
- ☐ Family (\$50)
- ☐ Donor (\$500)
- ☐ Patron (\$1,000+)

In addition to my membership, I am enclosing a gift of \$_____ to help:

- ☐ Restore the Kirkman House Museum
- ☐ Develop educational programs and exhibits
- ☐ Other: _____ Total amount enclosed: \$_____

Please return this form with your check payable to: Kirkman House Museum

Mail to: Kirkman House Museum 214 N. Colville Walla Walla, WA 99362

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