



## COMING TO RENTON: WHEN DID YOUR FAMILY MAKE RENTON THEIR HOME?

Submitted by: Carrie Cartwright Bergquist | Board President

*The more we learn about our local history, the more connections we can make between us and our fellow residents, their families, and the development of our community. Below, Carrie Bergquist shares about her family.*

My grandfather Dario Bulgarelli came from Piandelagotti, Italy in 1913. He passed through Renton by train on his way to meet his brother John Bulgarelli, who was employed by the Renton Denny Clay Co. The brick factory was located in a company town of Taylor, WA, just east of Hobart. My grandfather said the train ride from Renton to Taylor took longer than the train trip from New York to Seattle, due to all of the milk stops along the way.

My great-grandfather, Santo Bagnariol, arrived from Zoppola, Italy, in 1912, and also worked at the brick factory. It took seven years before my great-grandmother, Maria Pighin Bagnariol, and their three children could join him due to the cost of travel and WWI. My grandmother, Olive Bagnariol, the oldest of the three, arrived in 1919, and married Dario in 1923.

Dario and Olive had two children, George and Gloria.

In 1943, after graduating from TaHoMa High School, George joined the US Air Force as a ball turret gunner in a B-17. His plane was shot down in October of 1944, over Merseburg, Germany. He was killed after landing in a farmer's field and was buried in France before his remains were returned to the family in 1948. His final resting place is Greenwood Memorial Park in Renton.



1928 Olive and Dario and their children Gloria and George Bulgarelli.

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After Gloria graduated from TaHoMa High School, she moved to Renton and worked at Pacific Car and Foundry. When the war ended, most of those jobs were returned to the men, so Gloria and her mother went to work at the Service Laundry in Renton.

In 1946, the City of Seattle shut down the town of Taylor to protect the water, and it became part of the Cedar River Watershed. The brick factory was closed and moved to Renton. Dario worked for the brick factory for a total of 48 years, leaving at the mandatory retirement age of 65. He passed away at the age of 89.

I am amazed at how many of our families endured great change, hardship and loss, yet their strength, hope and dreams were passed down to us!

*Please reach out to RHS with your stories about how you and your family ended up in Renton to be shared in future newsletters @ [info@rentonhistory.org](mailto:info@rentonhistory.org)*



Photo from RHS artifact collection, Gladding McBean & Co. workers in front of Renton Plant office, 14 April 1949. (Harry E. Luther 3rd row standing, sixth from the right. Partial list in Accession File.) Bottom row - 4th in from the right - Dario Bulgarelli; sixth in from the right - John Bulgarelli 1986.073

## “WHAT’S UP” WITH THE RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY?

*The latest on the Historical Society, the Renton History Museum, and a relevant history leading up to our present status and future goals.*

*RHS and the Renton History Museum: A Long-Standing Partnership*

*An Interview with Tom Monahan*

Founded in 1966 by local teachers and librarians with the goal of preserving Renton’s history, RHS began operations by organizing small exhibits at local libraries. In 1979, RHS and the City of Renton partnered on the development of the Renton History Museum, located in Historic Fire Station #1. The City staffs the museum while RHS volunteers help with research, archival projects, grants, and community events.

This historic building that so many of you know as the center for all things Renton history is now temporarily closed(as of Fall 2025) for renovations to upgrade the safety of the building and to outfit it to better serve as a future center for a wide-variety of community engagement opportunities. Per the City of Renton, “The result will be a fresh face on the historic building, just in time for the nation’s 250th anniversary year.” While the Renton History Museum is closed, the Society will be operating separately from, but in partnership with the museum and the City of Renton. We look forward to partnering with the City again after the upgrade! We will simply be doing things like issuing our newsletters, providing genealogy services, scanning services, and making decisions on how to best display our collection.

Recently, Dr. Elizabeth Flanagan of RHS sat down to interview former Assistant to the Museum Director and Collections Manager, Tom Monahan. Their conversation provided a look into the partnership between RHS and the museum, as well as his thoughts on some relevant history of the partnership.

Monahan was born and raised in Renton, as was his mother. While Tom worked for the Museum and with RHS, he obtained a certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Washington and shared with Dr. Flanagan some of his takeaways from this specialization and its application to propelling RHS forward. Thanks to Monahan’s advice, the RHS Board is pursuing a project to virtually feature particular artifacts from our collection. Monahan stressed, “You’ve got the collection you’ve got,” while encouraging us to simply start getting information out to the community via short videos for social media and the RHS website.

## RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY & GENEALOGY QUARTERLY

### WINTER 2025

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carrie Bergquist, President  
Bill Gaw, Vice President  
Steve Bergquist, Treasurer  
Jacob Winters, Secretary  
Kai Dalton  
Alice Lockridge  
James Wilhoit

#### STAFF

Jennifer Douwes, Office Manager  
Jacob Winters, Newsletter Manager

#### DESIGN/PRINTING

Scott Douwes, Design & Layout  
The Renton Printery

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RENTON, WA 98056

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**Email:** [info@rentonhistory.org](mailto:info@rentonhistory.org)

**Website:** [rentonhistory.org](http://rentonhistory.org)

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 65,  
Renton, WA 98057

#### HOURS

Tuesday - Friday  
1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

#### RHS SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS

**Instagram:** [@rentonhistoricalsociety](https://www.instagram.com/rentonhistoricalsociety)

**Facebook Group:** Renton Historical Society

**Threads:** [rentonhistoricalsociety](https://www.threads.net/rentonhistoricalsociety)

**LinkedIn:** Renton Historical Society



During the interview, they also discussed bringing back traveling exhibits. One of the duties Tom fondly remembers helping with was assisting the director, Steve Anderson, in preparing the traveling exhibits and helping to distribute them to various locations, like the senior center, City Hall, as well as a few banks and other places. His passion for sharing the artifacts and exhibits with museum patrons was a great asset. “I was the main person when someone would come in and research a topic. I would be the one who helped them find what they were looking for.” He went on to say that sometimes this would lead him to do research for an article. One of his “main [duties] was doing research and writing articles for the newsletter...” Tom wrote for the RHS newsletter starting in the late 1990s up until around 2012. While the RHS is temporarily limited in how we can put our collection on display, we plan to take up Tom’s passion for sharing Renton’s history via traveling exhibits around town. Please reach out if you have ideas for traveling exhibits or where you might like to see them displayed!

*The Big Move*



As was previously mentioned, the physical location of the Renton History Museum in Historic Fire Station #1 has now (temporarily) closed. The first project the current Board of Directors took over at the end of June was to facilitate the move of RHS’s 40,000+ artifacts from the Museum to our new, but temporary, location: the Renton Technical College Annex Building (behind Greenwood Memorial Park). The RHS office and a significant portion of our collection will be hosted here until a proper museum space can be secured.

Former board member and Interim Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Flanagan coordinated with the RHS Board, the City of Renton Parks Department, and Hansen Brothers Moving & Storage to execute a flawless move of our large and invaluable collection. Over the course of one week, fragile artifacts were protected, documents and paper artifacts were filed and boxed, and everything was carefully organized and transported from the Museum to RHS’s new headquarters at the RTC Annex.

*Current Status and Goals*

Though limited by space to artfully display proper museum exhibits at this time, RHS members and the general public are always welcome to visit our new space. Come tour the space, view the careful storage of our collection, meet our new office manager, Jennifer Douwes, or brainstorm future possibilities for the Society with other community members!

The RHS Board maintains communication with the City of Renton, keeping the option of moving back to Historic Fire Station #1 post-renovation open, to re-establish the museum there. The Board is also busy networking and searching for other opportunities that may help the RHS collection be displayed to its full potential in a future community-centered museum space. Some of these opportunities include traveling exhibits in partnership with the Renton Civic Theater, involvement in Arts, Sciences, & Heritage Week with INSPIRE Washington, and involvement with City of Renton events, including America250 and the City’s 125th Birthday.

Due to our current transition out of the Renton History Museum and into a more temporary space, there is so much potential for RHS over the next year and beyond. We are excited to offer as many events and opportunities as possible formembers while working to establish a more permanent museum space. We look forward to seeing RHS members and volunteers around our new building and would love to include you, however we can, in our shared love for Renton, its history, and the history of those who have lived here.

# PRESIDENT’S REPORT AND RHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATES

Carrie Bergquist was elected President of the Board of Directors at the Renton Historical Society’s (RHS) annual membership meeting in June of 2025, returning to a position she previously held between 1989 and 1991. This update includes general RHS news, Carrie’s hopes for the Society’s future, an introduction to the new Board, and an acknowledgement of the previous board’s hard work toward RHS’s goals.

When Carrie joined the Board in the 1980s, she recalls, the society had been initially operating on a small budget as a potluck-style organization. In 1979, with the help of Ernie Tonda, they began utilizing Historic Fire Station #1 after the fire department moved to their new station next door. In an interview with then-interim Executive Director, Dr Elizabeth Flanagan, Carrie provided a brief history of how RHS transitioned from their potluck-style organization to its current status.

Ernie Tonda, Carrie noted, played a key role in the early days of RHS: “Ernie’s abilities to talk to the City, to make the building happen, and get the community to back us,” says Carrie, “is what started our strong partnership with the City of Renton.” Much of the early donations and accessions were mainly thanks to his efforts.

Carrie also mentioned the creation of an endowment program, an idea initiated by Steve Anderson, Museum Director, in 1997, which she chaired. Initially, some members of the board were hesitant to move forward with this endowment program, but they agreed to allow an internal Endowment Committee to manage \$65,000 of the \$100,000 in their savings. We continued with Ken Becker, Naomi Mathieson, and Randy Rockhill on the committee.

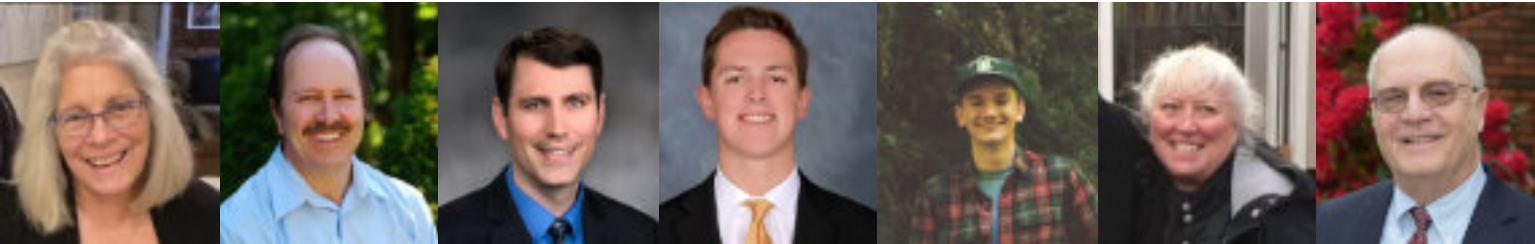
In 2001, RHS received a large donation from the Charlie Custer Estate. The funds were transferred to the Renton Community Foundation. In 2004, RHS

transferred the account to our current financial advisor, Shane Klingenstein at Edward Jones. Thanks to this effort and the work of the Endowment Committees that followed, RHS is self-sustaining. They operate on a \$200,000+ annual budget, allowing for the employment of staff members, programming for society members, archival work of RHS artifacts and documents, and more. Additionally, the endowment includes an account set aside as a building fund, which the board hopes to combine with other future donations and savings to expand Renton Historical’s footprint in the Renton community. We are always excited to talk with members about our shared goals for the future prospects of RHS!

Fast forward to today and Carrie still brings with her a passion, not only for preserving and promoting Renton history, but for expanding RHS’ offerings of genealogy services to RHS members and the Renton community at large. She emphasized “the value for young people to understand that they come from generations of others” and how the RHS’s offering of genealogy services can help attract the interest of youth in the Renton community. In providing members with exclusive access to RHS genealogy software and continual updates regarding publicly-available resources, Carrie and the RHS want to help YOU piece together your family’s history!

The Renton Historical Society would like to thank the immediate past Board of Directors for their dedicated service to the furthering of the goals and plans of the RHS.

Thank you President Christopher Howell, Vice President Carrie Bergquist, Treasurer Makenna O’Meara, Secretary Courtney Warren, Director Tony Howell, Director Leigh Gath, Director Elizabeth Flanagan, and Director Kai Dalton!



From right to left. Carrie is joined in her volunteer role on the RHS Board of Directors by the following volunteers: Vice President, Bill Gaw; Treasurer, Steve Bergquist; Secretary, Jacob Winter; Director, Kai Dalton, Director, Alice Lockridge; and Director, James Wilhoit.



# SWEETHEART GRAVES IN GREENWOOD MEMORIAL CEMETERY, RENTON HIGHLANDS

Submitted by: Alice Lockridge, MS | Renton Historical Society Board Member | Nov, 2025



A shared headstone at Greenwood Memorial Cemetery<sup>1</sup> in Renton, Washington memorializes two young adults, Debra Marie Evans and Larry Scott Leek, who died in 1984, with the inscription: “Sweethearts. They Died for Love in the Green River Gorge.”

Young sweethearts died on May 28, 1984, Memorial Day Weekend, at the Green River Gorge near Black Diamond, WA.

When we are no longer able to tell our own life stories, we will be left to the writings of others. What do your relatives know about your daily life, your friends, your sweethearts, and your preferences? If we don’t communicate well with others, we might be surprised by what is said about us after our deaths.

A local story from a warm holiday weekend at the river is etched in stone on the gravestone of two 20 somethings that went for a drive and drowned in the Gorge. Rafters testified that a guy leaped into the water and began to swim toward Debra, but he slipped beneath the surface. They did not find him that day, and the King County Police asked for the public’s help to identify him.

Debra’s death certificate says she drowned while attempting to save her dog. The details of Scott’s

death were not as easily known. When Debra was pulled out of the Green River, the kayakers knew a boy had tried to swim to her, but they didn’t know who he was or where he went. Scott’s death was announced in the local paper on June 1st. His death certificate (dated June 26, 1984) says his death was an accident of freshwater drowning. He was found floating in the Green River.

Debra was 20 years of age, and she worked as a Nurse’s Aid at a Convalescent Center.

Scott was 21 years of age, and he was a Warehouse worker at SeaWest Equipment Co. in Renton.

These two young people are buried beside each other in the Azalea Plot of Greenwood Cemetery in the Renton Highlands beside Scott’s parents, Larry and Beverly. Debra and Scott are buried in a grave with the heading: “Sweethearts” and the inscription: “They died for love, Greenriver Gorge.”

<sup>1</sup> Greenwood Memorial Park and Funeral Home, About Us (Renton, WA: Dignity Memorial), accessed August 16, 2025, <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/funeral-homes/washington/renton/greenwood-memorial-park-funeral-home/2480>. Information for this article was sourced from a May 30, 1984 article from The News Tribune.

# AMERICA250 IN RENTON!

*And Celebrating Renton’s 125th Birthday.*

As July 4, 2026, approaches, the Renton Historical Society is excited to join the City of Renton, the State of Washington, and the entire United States of America in celebrating our country’s 250th anniversary of independence.

Fun Fact - 250th anniversaries can be termed in the following ways: Semiquincentennial (half of 500 years), Sestercentennial (halfway between the 2nd and 3rd centuries), Bisesquicentennial (two and a

half centuries).

Look out for RHS hosting Apple Pie booths at neighborhood and city-wide events leading up to the Fourth of July 2026 and traveling exhibits around the city.



## Celebration Grants

In recognition of this year’s significant upcoming anniversaries in federal and local history, the Renton Historical Society (RHS) has established a new funding initiative for the 2026 fiscal year. We plan to use this funding initiative, designated as “Celebration Grants” in the approved 2026 RHS budget, to support youth programming in the Renton community.

The core purpose of these Celebration Grants is to actively foster and support the exploration, teaching, and commemoration of federal and local history within the Renton School District. These competitive grants will be made available specifically to educators and students across all grade levels within the district. The grants are intended to provide necessary financial resources for projects, activities, and events that directly relate to and celebrate the rich history of Renton,

Washington state, and all of the United States, encouraging a deeper connection between the community’s past and its future generations. This strategic investment aims to ensure history remains a vibrant and integral part of the Renton School District’s curriculum and student experience. We aim to build a stronger bridge between the community’s past and the students of the future. This will keep history alive and a meaningful part of what Renton School District students learn and experience every day.

A note of encouragement to parents of students – pursuing a family history, even one that isn’t your own, lends an exciting way to study and enjoy history. For example, I’ve learned 10x more about the War of 1812 by relating it to a family descendant. Help your student(s) test it out – apply for a grant.



Scan me with your phone or tablet to access the online form.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Select a membership level

### Basic membership

- ☐ \$10 - Individual
- ☐ \$8 - Student/Senior
- ☐ \$15 - Family

### Sustaining membership

- ☐ \$75 - Benefactor
- ☐ \$150 - Patron
- ☐ \$175 - Business/Corporate
- ☐ \$250 - Lifetime membership

Please consider making a tax deductible donation! Your donations help us provide exhibits and exciting programs.

Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Payment Information

Visa or MC #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp date: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Renton Historical Society.



# RHS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE... THROWBACK!

To help celebrate the upcoming country-wide 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, RHS is launching a special membership drive, rolling back costs to what they were 25 years ago in honor of America250.

“We Want YOU” to join the Renton Historical Society membership!

### America250 Rates

- Individual Annual Membership: \$10
- Student or Senior Annual Membership: \$8
- Family Annual Membership: \$15
- Patron Annual Membership: \$150
- Lifetime Membership: \$250



Join or Renew Your Membership [HERE](#)



### Benefits of Membership

- 20% off merchandise
- Early access to online exhibits
- Donor recognition on our website
- Invitations to member-only events
- Scanning services
- Genealogy services
- Increased opportunities to vote
- Free classes, tours, and workshops

# RECENT HAPPENINGS WITH RHS AND ITS COMMUNITY

August 21, 2025

On August 21, 2025, RHS Board President Carrie Bergquist was recognized by the Washington State Genealogical Society for her “exceptional service to the Grays Harbor Genealogical Society and the North Beach Genealogy Society.” We are SO proud of her and look forward to offering genealogy services to the Renton community to help YOU connect to your family’s roots.

The RHS board is offering genealogy services and has helped several families recently. One request included the history of the Italian heirloom bean of the Belluno region. Our research uncovered that this pole bean was given by the Saturnini family to a Maple Valley family, and they are still growing them today. George Saturnini was a past RHS volunteer prior to his passing in 2010.

October 11, 2025

On Saturday, October 11, 2025, RHS members Carrie Bergquist, Elizabeth Flanagan, and Leonard Flanagan attended a tour of the ghost town, Taylor, WA. The Maple Valley Historical Society, in collaboration with the City of Seattle, hosted this tour to view old sites and remaining structural artifacts of this Denny-Renton Clay Company town. Many of our Renton families lived in Taylor and moved to Renton to continue working at the brick factory and other industries.

Additional Ref.: “One Hundred Years Along the Cedar River” by Morda C. Slauson



Photo credit: Carrie Bergquist, October, 2025.  
Tour photo.



Photo from Carrie’s collection, April 2005. Many of the folks in 2005 lived in Taylor. Family names: Bulgarelli, Gardin, Malleta, Kinder, Krall, Donkers. Let us know if your family name should be added to the above list.



Photo credit: Carrie Bergquist, Two people holding a picture of the town of Taylor.

Thank You, Daisy Ward!

Carrie Bergquist was recently able to visit with longtime RHS Member and Volunteer, Daisy Ward. Daisy was issued a “Jill of All Trades” award for her hard work and dedication to the Renton History Museum. Daisy worked countless hours supporting and preserving the history of Renton.

Most recently, Daisy assisted RHS in providing obituaries to be recognized in the above “In Memoriam” section of this newsletter.

Photo Credit Carrie Bergquist. Daisy Ward, November 2025





On Sunday, Nov. 2, and on Dec. 7, 2025, a Northshore-area group of middle school students visited RHS to research challenges and opportunities surrounding the “Curation Crisis” many museums are facing. In their preparation for this year’s First Lego League “FLL” Robotics competition, following the theme of Archaeology, these students, team name New Dimension, examined our storage and limitations and considered solutions with President Carrie Bergquist and past RHS board member Vinod Waghamare.

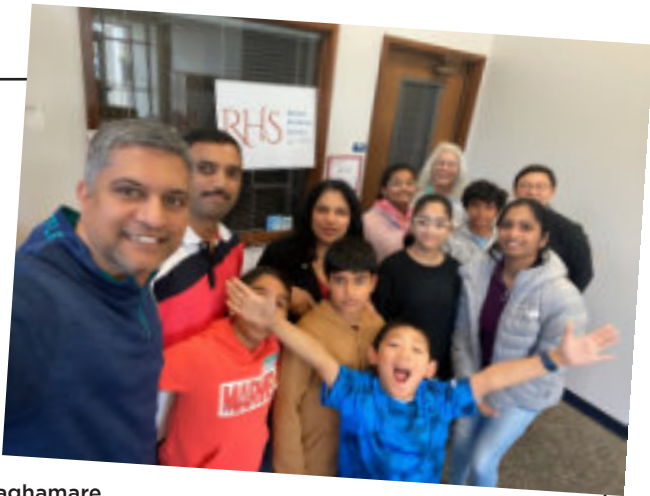


Photo credit: Vinod Waghamare



Aria Poonater, Shrvya Shah, Novika Thatipamula, Adhrit Vinodkumar, Vihaan Waghamare, Leo Wang, Tanmay Naveena Sompige, **Advisor and Coach** - Vinod Waghamare, **Co-coach** - Naveena Mallikarjuniah.



# LOCAL FOLKS SHARING THE RENTON LOVE

Check out these great Renton-centric social media accounts!



Eric Tuazon’s: “Renton Then and Now” is on Facebook and Instagram.

You know you’re from Renton if.....  
Facebook group.



Larry Lehnerz’s: “Renton Remembered: A Story Scrapbook” a Facebook Group



# GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY



**Arts, Heritage, and Science (AHS) Week** brings together leaders and cultural professionals from across Washington state as advocates to meet with state legislators about statewide cultural funding, policies, and highlight local stories and concerns from communities across the state.

For more details on getting involved with advocating for our community, please contact Jacob Winter: secretary@rentonhistory.org

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS WINTER 2025-26

- **Volunteer Hours:** Tues-Fri, 1-4 pm - Stop by & say Hello!
- **Dec 17@1-4PM** - Holiday Open House @RTC Annex. Meet our new board & Office Manager!
- **Dec 22-31 - Holiday Closure** Please email or call to make an appointment to visit.
- **Jan 1-2** - Office Closed for holiday.
- **Jan 14, Wed @5:30 pm** - Writing Class @RTC Annex: How to do research for fiction and non-fiction historical writing. Part 1 of a 3-part series.  
**Members:** Free, \$15 for the public. Must sign up - space limited.
- **Jan 27** - Board Meeting @RTC Annex.

### Volunteers

Our office is coming together nicely here at the Renton Technical College (RTC) Annex. We are actively organizing our space, and we couldn't do it without our wonderful volunteers. A BIG thank you to Eric Tuazon, Liz Hemenway, Larry Lehnerz, Elizabeth Flanagan, Greg Bergquist, Todd Conley, Hayes Trimm, Bill Gaw, Kai Dalton, Jacob Winter, Steve Bergquist, Alice Lockridge, James Wilhoit,

Carrie Bergquist, Cathy Corman, Scott Douwes, and Jennifer Douwes. There is A LOT more to do, though, so don't worry if you still want to give us a hand. We'd love to have you. Please call or email us at 425-473-0411 or info@rentonhistory.org. We can schedule a time to give you a tour and get you started!



### Newly Arrived Artifacts

A big thank you to our 2025 artifact donors! We look forward to featuring more unique relics from Renton's history donated to RHS each quarter.

Jack Bradley, a Renton local since 1962, recently donated a nice selection of projectors. We are grateful Jack thought of us to safeguard his impressive collection of historical significance, and look forward to creating an exhibit to share the story of the projectors and Mr. Bradley.

Photo Credit: Bill Gaw, November 2025. Newly accessioned projector.

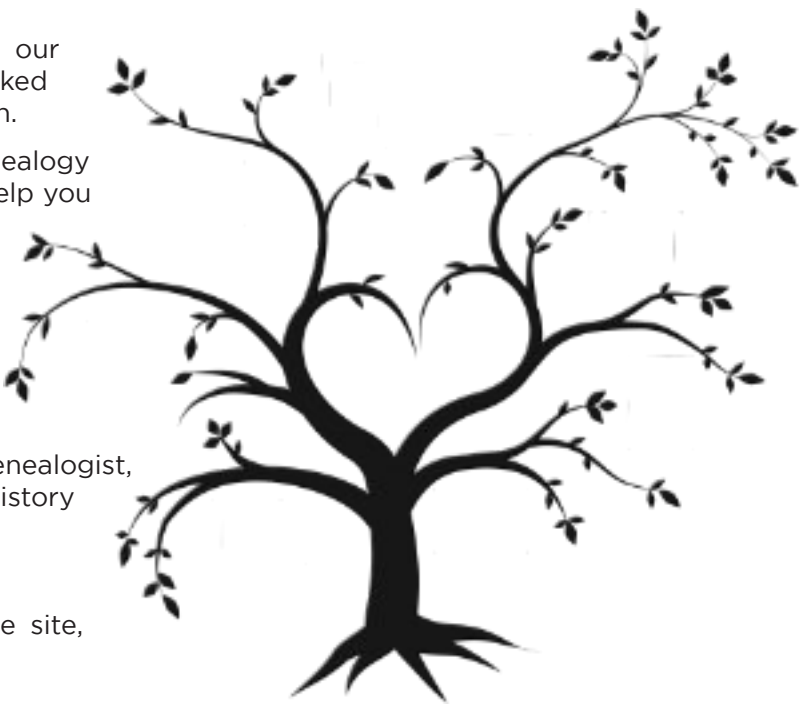


# GENEALOGY CORNER

One of our favorite new offerings at RHS is our Genealogy services. You may have noticed we’ve talked about it a few times already in this newsletter edition.

An exciting new addition to our newsletter is our Genealogy Corner, where we’ll share helpful tips and tools to help you explore your family history.

One great source is FamilySearch.org. It is a free site, but you must create an account and sign in to access its services. We feel the most useful tool that FamilySearch offers is ‘Full Text Searching’ using AI. It has been upgraded and includes several filters. We suggest that you watch a Youtube video by Aimee Cross, a professional genealogist, titled, "Unlocking New Discoveries in your Family History is now Easier" to assist in using this great tool.



If you have questions or need help navigating the site, please text Carrie at 206-276-7889.

# ARTISTS AND AUTHORS MAKING HISTORY

## Published Authors Making Local History

If you are a local author who has published a book, we’d love for you to take part in our newsletter section celebrating local art and writing!

What we need:

- A 300 dpi image of your book cover.
- A web address where it can be purchased.
- Your Name and contact information.

Send this to [info@rentonhistory.org](mailto:info@rentonhistory.org)

We look forward to hearing from you!



## Artists Making Local History

If you are a local artist who has created a local publicly displayed piece of art, we’d love for you to take part in our newsletter section celebrating local art and writing!

What we need:

- A 300 dpi picture of the original art.
- A 300 dpi picture of the art piece, where it is displayed, to share the context.
- An address where it can be viewed.
- Your Name and contact information.

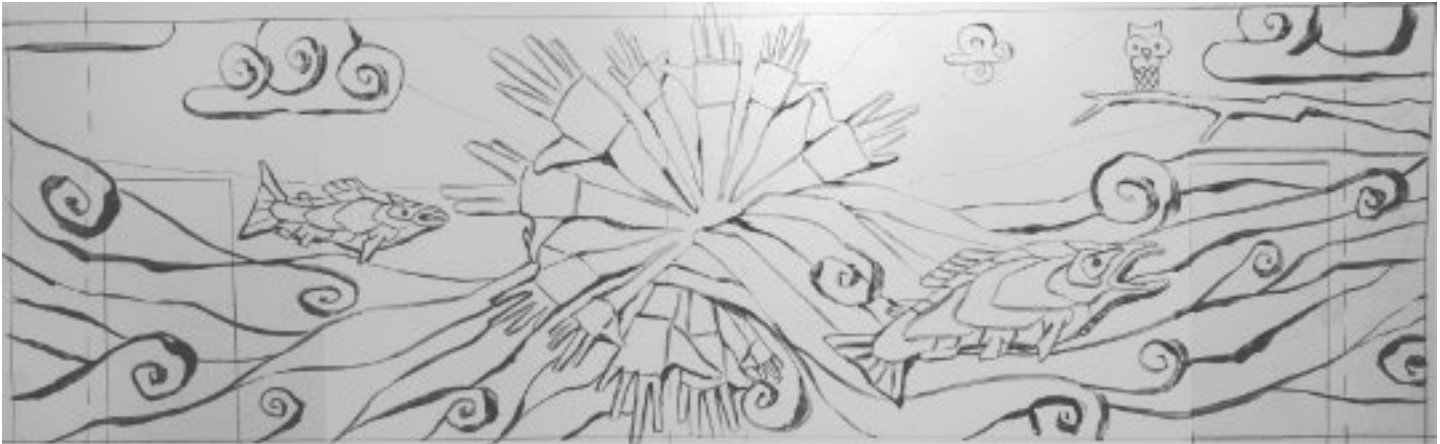
Send this to [info@rentonhistory.org](mailto:info@rentonhistory.org)

Artist: Meena Merchant  
Photo Credit: Renton Municipal Arts Coalition

This image was displayed at City Hall. Currently unavailable for public viewing.



Artist: Scott Douwes , Carco Theater Mural





# MEMBER RECOGNITION

Please help us welcome new members of the Renton Historical Society:

- **Alice Lockridge**
  - **Jacob Winter**
- **Steve and Avanti Bergquist and family**
- **Dan and Liz Hemenway**
  - **Greg Bergquist**

Large Donors:

- **Linda Della Rossa**
  - **Kirk Mathewson**
- **Alice Lockridge**
  - **Kristy Sharkey**
- **Bernie O'Donnell**
  - **Karen Boswell**

New Lifetime Member:

- **Bernie O'Donnell**

# IN MEMORIAM

**Ted Gatz** 1926-2025

Sunday, October 26, 2025, Theodore “Ted” Gatz, 99, passed away.

Ted was born on August 14, 1926, and grew up in Rainier Beach, Washington. After attending Franklin High School in Seattle, he joined the U.S. Navy during WWII.

In 1949, Ted began his photography career working at Mariner’s Studio in Renton. Ted was a “gifted” photographer and later opened “Ted Gatz Photography” in Renton. He specialized in Portraiture, Wedding, and Commercial photography. He was the Renton High School senior class photographer in the 1960’s & 70’s.

**Shirley Custer** 1935-2025

Shirley Yvonne Custer (nee Bakken) was born in Valley City, North Dakota. She and her family moved to the Seattle area when Shirley was a young girl. She attended grade school and high school in Renton. After graduating from Renton High, Shirley attended the U. W.

Shirley remarried in 1966 to Bert Custer. She and Bert eventually retired to the Renton area and built a beautiful home on Renton Hill. Shirley spent 43 years in that home, where she entertained, nurtured, and loved her close and extended family until her death.

Source: <https://www.rentonreporter.com/obituaries/shirley-yvonne-custer-nee-bakken-obituary/>

**Bruce Phillips** 1929-2025

Bruce Phillips, 95, of Renton, WA, passed away on October 27, 2025. He was born Dec. 29, 1929, in Yakima, WA.

He graduated from Issaquah High School, where he met his wife, Marilyn Pringle. They were married for 75 years.

Bruce joined the US Naval Reserve in 1947 and served on active duty during the Korean War. Bruce began his career with the Renton Fire Department in 1955 and retired as a Deputy Chief after 31 years in 1986.

Bruce was known for his hunting and fishing days, especially with his family in Eastern Washington.

**Ronald ‘Ron’ David Clymer** 1942-2025

In memory of Ron, who was a humble, thoughtful, and soft-spoken man and a father that his children looked up to. His love for ALL of his family and his devotion to his many friends will live on.

**Herbert L Postlewait** 1940-2025

Born Nov 2, 1940 in Conrad, Montana and he left the world June 19, 2025. Graduate of Renton High School class of ‘58. Served in the US Navy 1958 to 1962.

**Stephen Clymer** 1950-2025

Stephen Earl Clymer, 74, of Renton, WA, passed away peacefully in his sleep on March 16, 2025. Born on November 8, 1950, at Renton Hospital to Earl & Diane Clymer, Stephen grew up in Skyway and later Renton Hill. He attended Renton schools and graduated from Renton High School in 1969. He was proud that his grandchildren would be fifth-generation RHS graduates. Stephen earned an education degree from Seattle University and married Theresa Ann O’Brien on June 29, 1974. He began his career teaching third grade at Shadow Lake Elementary before exploring other ventures, including doughnut making and running Clymer’s Antique Boutique in downtown Renton.

Source: <https://www.rentonreporter.com/obituaries/stephen-earl-clymer-obituary/>

**Lila Jean Tonda** 1923-2025

Lila Jean Tonda passed away from natural causes at the age of 102, on February 11, 2025.

After graduation she was hired by Dr. Helperin and worked in the family clinic in downtown Renton. This is where she met Ernie Tonda. They were married in 1950 at Saint Anthony’s church in Renton.

She is survived by her son Todd, daughter Mary Ann, son-in-law John Coles, and her grandchildren, Ian and Abby Coles.

**Barbara Ann Magnuson (Mitchell)** 1931-2025

Born April 30, 1931 in Seattle, WA, Barbara grew up in Renton. She graduated from

Renton High School in the class of ‘49. Barbara is survived by her husband, Waldo G. Magnuson, Jr., and her two children, Brett Douglas Magnuson (Nubis) of Bothell, WA, and Merrilee Ann Lane (James) of Spokane, WA. She passed away February 26, 2025.

<b>Mario Tonda</b>	1926-2024		<b>Barbara Jean Nilson</b>	1928-2025
<b>Eleanor Bertagni</b>	1931-2025		<b>Andy DeLeuw</b>	1960-2025
<b>Margaret Louise Burkhalter</b>	1928-2025		<b>Judy Nichols</b>	1943-2025
<b>Daniel Edmond Holms</b>	1942-2025	Renton High School Grad Class of 1960	<b>Claudette Bergman</b>	1936-2025
<b>Nancy Ann Carlson</b>	1950-2025		<b>Patricia Ballestrasse</b>	1942-2025



Artist: Scott Douwes , Carco Theater Mural



RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
3407 NE 2ND ST.  
RENTON, WA 98056

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## RECOGNIZING RHS SUPPORTERS

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The important work of maintaining, promoting, and furthering the history of our great city would not be possible without the support of the many organizations, volunteers, and experts we get the pleasure of partnering with.

The Renton Historical Society would like to express our immense gratitude to the following:

