

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island

HISTORICAL SOCIETY



In This Issue:

- **Preview P2**
- **President's Report P3**
- **The Heritage Apple Orchard P5**
- **Fifty Years of history:
A Memoir by Rich Anderson P6**
- **Photos P11**

Fall 2025 Newsletter Preview

by Sally Buchanan

A part-time neighbor recently sent a note, saying “Fall is my favorite time on the Island”. While we miss our snowbird friends, many of the AIHS members cherish the beautiful colors, mellow temperatures and quiet that comes to Anderson Island in the Autumn. At the Johnson Farm, activities involve some “putting to bed” in the gardens, greenhouse and buildings. Yet, our loyal volunteers continue maintaining, grooming, planning and developing the property as family cares for a beloved home.

This newsletter spotlights our own historical journey. Now fifty years of growing, with dreams still becoming reality, Bob Bedoll, President, and Rick Anderson, archivist and first president, have written their thoughts and memories. Rick’s memoir is a retelling of the presentation he offered during our exceptional celebration. Not one to relax much, Rick is heading the big new project for a long future: the Heritage Orchard.

The heart and soul of our farm is involvement of members. Dick Throm contributed much, including the original apple orchard, which is the source of cider for our annual Apple Squeeze. Dick has a rich lifetime of other contributions, and recently started our season of potlucks and lectures telling of his early farm memories. He also shared an impressive educational slide presentation about his experience in the Korean War. You can see the video on our web page. When life leads some of us off-island, we treasure these ongoing relationships. Sutton and Karen Stephens both contributed greatly to our Farm story. They return now and then to visit, and enjoyed a gift bag from our garden market.

If this were an annual corporate report, we members would all be pleased to see tremendous progress and exciting new exhibits. Photos will give you a sense of our corporate fun and shared work, but we will save some details for the Annual Meeting and potluck on November 22. Do join us.



President's Report

by Bob Bedoll

Thank you AIHS members for helping us celebrate our fiftieth anniversary! AIHS was incorporated on August 4, 1975. I'm sure the original members had their doubts as to whether the organization would last even five years – and yet here we are, fifty years later, and AIHS is bigger and stronger than ever. When the historical society took over the farm in 1975, the house, barn, building, and grounds were all in rather poor condition after years of neglect. Our volunteers have spent the last 50 years improving the grounds and the buildings, and today the farm is in great condition and is a fitting tribute to the hard work, determination, and ingenuity of the Johnsons and other island pioneers.

The AIHS board spent months trying to come up with an appropriate way to celebrate our fiftieth anniversary. After a lot of discussion, we elected to have a proper party that would be free for all our members and was something more than just hot dogs and pop. We expected about a hundred people, but to our astonishment about 240 of you showed up to celebrate with steak and salmon, a bounty of sides and salads and desserts, and drinks. Fortunately, we did not run out of food. Everyone stayed to listen to Rick Anderson, the first AIHS president, give us a vibrant history of the organization. Rick's wonderful speech is reproduced elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our mission has always been to preserve, present, and engage. We have always done a great job of preserving the farm and presenting the farmhouse. This year we have upped our game on the presentation side by adding about 30 interpretative signs to the farm. We have new signs for the antique vehicles, new signs for all the farm implements, new signs in the barn, new signs in Coop 2, new signs for the nature trail,

REPORT

REPORT

and new signs for the orchard and gardens – as well as the big maps of the farm.

This year our board members have worked tirelessly to improve the farm and the organization. These folks not only improve the organization – they improve the quality of life on this island and help make it such a special place in the universe. A big thank you goes to Carol Paschal, our Vice President and Garden Chairman, Todd Billett, our long-time treasurer, Sally Buchanan, our Secretary, Rick Anderson, our Archives Chairman, Serena Frank, our Events Chairman, Lee Ann Whitaker, our Education Chairman, Jim Battishill, our (retired) Operations Chairman, Ed Stephenson, our former president and archival building manager and Leslie Lamb and Virginia Cummings, our gift store managers. Each of these folks could fill an entire page with the amazing things they've done this year, but for now we will leave that to the Annual Meeting.

Some of our board members have served for a long time and are looking to step down. We are looking for volunteers to step in as President, Vice President, treasurer, and Operations Chairman. Being a member of the AIHS board is a fulfilling experience and an opportunity to serve your community and make a difference in the quality of life on this island. I have been blessed in being able to serve as president for the past nine years, and I have felt nothing but pride in this organization. I hope that some of you will be willing to step forward and help us fill these positions. You will find it rewarding and fulfilling. Please send me an email at robertbedoll@gmail.com if you are interested.

Bob Bedoll,
AIHS President ●

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS . A LITTLE NEW NEWS

HERITAGE

The Heritage Apple Orchard

By Rick Anderson

Down on the hillside by the barn and the pumpkin patch, the new Heritage Apple Orchard is beginning to take shape. Under the leadership of master fence builder Paul Oppenheim, fence posts have been installed around the nearly one acre site. Meanwhile, tiny saplings grafted from 17 different varieties of apples from island pioneer apples are growing down at Burnt Ridge Nursery in Onalaska, Washington. Recently, samples from four more promising apples found growing on the island were sent to Pullman for DNA testing to determine their varieties. In all, it is planned that the orchard will have around 65 trees from about 25 different species of apples. Time will tell which ones will be good for cider, baking, sauce, or just plain eating. Apples obviously played an important role in the lives of the early pioneer families, since practically every family started an orchard almost as soon as they arrived on the island. Expect fruit from these unique historical trees within 5 or 6 years, and be sure to ask about the special rewards offered to those who make a donation to cover the costs of the Heritage Orchard. ●

THE OLD APPLE TREE



THE NEW ORCHARD

MEMOIR

Fifty Years of history: A Memoir by Rich Anderson

Where does the time go? It flies, according to the proverb, and 1975 seems like just yesterday in some ways. It was a time of monumental change on our island.

Sons and daughters of the pioneers were passing away, and our connection to the early settlers was fading. Early in 1975, several prominent and revered islanders died, including Bessie Cammon, Rudy Johnson, and Andrew Anderson, each a true pillar of the community in his and her own way. The Riviera Community Club was less than 10 years old, and people had just started building and moving to their lots. Electric power and dial phones were new harbingers of a different future.

In the spring of 1975, a group of islanders began meeting to advance the dream of having a museum on the island, in hopes that the Johnson farm, then defunct, could fulfill that role.

Those were heady times. In July, papers were filed to form the Anderson Island Historical Society. The actual date of incorporation was August 2, 1975. In September, Alma Ruth Laing and her father, Al Laing, deeded nearly 10 acres of the Johnson Farm, including the farmhouse and the outbuildings, to be our museum.

It would be hard to overstate the role of Lois Scholl in the founding of the museum. Lois moved to the island in 1969 or 70, one of the very first to live full-time in the Riviera. She couldn't have been an inch over 4'10", but she had a big heart, big dreams, and abundant energy. Lois became good friends with Rudy Johnson, cared for him through ill-health, and used to tell him the farm would make an excellent museum. He never took that very seriously, but Lois also befriended and cared for Alma Ruth, and planted the seed that a museum would be a wonderful

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS . A LITTLE NEW NEWS

MEMOIR

monument to the Johnson family. She spearheaded the community meetings and volunteered her attorney nephew's time to draw up the articles of incorporation. and she was listed as "the incorporator." That is why she is known as the "Mother of the Museum," and you can see her portrait in the Farmhouse and the Archival Building.

In September of 1975, we held a banquet attended by over 100 people to thank Alma Ruth and her father and inaugurate the new museum. Then we got to work! The farm was in serious disrepair. Fortunately, there was a group of recently retired handymen, including especially Ralph Christianson and Russ Cammon, who practically lived at the farm, hammering, painting, roofing, shoveling - all things that go on to this day, of course. Our board meetings were held in the living room of the farmhouse. Some of us wanted to have someone live in the house, so it would be more secure. That is what was approved by the board, and a candidate recruited, but it almost provoked a riot and the plan was scrubbed.

In 1976 we took over hosting the Salmon Bake, which was a tradition started by the Anderson Island boat club, going back to the 1950's. they would literally go out that morning and catch enough salmon to feed 50, 60 people whatever, at Christiansons' Beach at Otso Point. later that year, we had the first Cider Squeeze, with two hand-cranked cider presses. one was donated by Lois Scholl, and it can be seen down at the barn to this day. the photo contest was initiated that year, with the goal of creating an on-going record of life on the island. In the 1980's the community gardens were established. Chet Palmer was hired to build the dragon - or is it a horse? - to take the crankiness out of the cider squeeze, in the 1990's the orchard was planted, under the leadership of Dick Throm.

When the society celebrated its 25th anniversary in the year 2000,

Fall, 2025 Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A LITTLE OLD NEWS . A LITTLE NEW NEWS

MEMOIR

Bettymae Anderson suggested that we embark on the construction of an archival library building. Instead, a committee formed with the purpose of formulating goals to meet by the time of our 50th anniversary in 2025. Of course, that seemed like an impossibly long time, but the committee, which included Randy and Bmae Anderson, Ed and Lucy Stephenson, Dave and Jeanne McGoldrick, Dick Throm and yours truly began meeting monthly and kicking around ideas. We soon decided that what we needed was a large archival storage building. By 2008, we had secured the voluntary services of an architect, Norifume Hashibe, who developed three alternative concepts which were presented to the public in the fall of 2008. they were each estimated to cost around \$1.5 million.

A funny thing happened that year, namely a disastrous financial crisis with the collapse of many banks and other financial institutions. the prospects for raising that kind of money seemed kind of dim, so it was back to the drawing board. We looked at all kinds of alternatives for erecting a low-cost building, with the main criterion besides its function that it fit in harmoniously with the rest of the farm. one night we came up with the idea of two chicken coop structures joined by a central hall, and the strategy of building it ourselves with primarily volunteer labor. this plan actually succeeded, through a series of almost miraculous events.

By 2018 we had our new archival building, seven years ahead of our 2025 goal! We recognize and thank an incredible 20,000 man-hours of volunteer labor, generous private donations of nearly \$300,000, and a Washington State grant of a quarter of a million dollars secured by Dave McGoldrick. From the original vision of a storage building, the Archival Building has become the symbol of the Historical Society's outreach to the island, providing facilities for everything from exercise classes to concerts and memorial services. All of this is documented in Bob Bedoll and John Larsen's wonderful movie, *The Johnson Farm Story*. Other

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS . A LITTLE NEW NEWS

MEMOIR

movies, *the Anderson Island Story* and the delightful *Good Ship Tahoma* have taken our efforts to preserve, document, and educate the public on the history of our island to an entirely new level.

Obviously, this historical society and our museum are the result of tremendous team work and community support, but I especially want to recognize the role of our current president, Bob Bedoll, and our immediate past president, Ed Stephenson, for leading us into what some are calling the golden age of the historical society. Words honestly fail me; suffice it to say that we all owe an immense debt of gratitude for the leadership of these men.

As we look to the future, we have several on-going projects which promise to secure an even more glorious future. one is the new signage project spearheaded by Bob Bedoll, which has made our collection more accessible and understandable to today's public, many of whom know nothing about life on a farm. Another is the plan to extend some TLC to the bare wooden exteriors of our precious outbuildings, undertaken by Rick Stockstad. Under the leadership of Mary Rabe, the iconic Johnson Farmhouse is getting a much-needed makeover. Another is the reinventing of the *Thick & Thin Sawmill exhibit*, the brainchild of Phil Lutes. Just underway is the *Heritage Apple Orchard*, where by grafting, we are creating new trees from some of the more than hundred-year-old, virtually extinct varieties found in pioneer orchards around the island.

These, and so many other projects are fun, exciting, and could use your help and support. The pride and joy we feel about our historical society are due entirely to the support of our wonderful community, from those long-ago days fifty years ago to this very day. Truly, this historical society is one of the great loves of my life, and hopefully of yours too!

Thank you keep up the good work!!! ●

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS . A LITTLE NEW NEWS

PHOTOS



Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS. A LITTLE NEW NEWS

PHOTOS



Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS. A LITTLE NEW NEWS

PHOTOS



HERITAGE ORCHARD FENCE IS COMING!



NEW ANTIQUE WAGON HEADS TO THE BARN

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS. A LITTLE NEW NEWS

PHOTOS



**DICK THROM WITH FRIENDS
AFTER HIS PRESENTATION**

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS. A LITTLE NEW NEWS

PHOTO



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!



DAVE DRIVES OUR ANTIQUE IN THE PARADE

Fall, 2025

Anderson Island HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A LITTLE OLD NEWS. A LITTLE NEW NEWS

PHOTOS



**UNBELIEVABLE FOCUS FROM
OUR YOUNGEST HELPER**