



Prairie Gazette

Winter 2024

Official Publication, Lakewood Historical Society



Old Game Farm's new life as South Puget Sound Urban Wildlife Interpretive Center.

by Chuck Mathias



Sure, it's been nearly forty years since a ninety-acre property near the heart of Lakewood was actually used to raise and release game animals, but...

...if you're the kind of deep-rooted Lakewoodian who still calls the *Lakewood Towne Center* the *Villa Plaza* then the *South Puget Sound Urban Wildlife Interpretive Center* will always be the **Old Game Farm** to you—a shorter version of the name the Washington Department of Fisheries and Game gave the property when it took it over in 1922. Officially, it was the **South Tacoma Game Farm and Fish Hatchery**.

That's assuming you know the place at all, of course—the Interpretive Center *is* a bit off the beaten path, lying



Recently installed kiosks provide information to visitors taking a self-guided tour.

just east of the vast Oakbrook development and half a mile north of the busy intersection of Phillips Road and Steilacoom Boulevard. That's nothing, though, compared to how far off the beaten path the property must have seemed to pioneer **Adam Byrd** when he first laid eyes on it in 1852

Byrd was granted a homestead claim of 318.2 acres on June 1st of that year, with his son Andrew receiving an additional 168.79 acres along both sides of Chambers Creek. A small part of their property became the game farm many decades later.

This sprawling homestead was the government's way of rewarding Adam for hauling himself and his family the 2,000 rugged



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PRAIRIE GAZETTE

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The staff of Prairie Gazette actively encourages input from the Society's members as well as the general public regarding story ideas of any other aspects of this newsletter, and the Lakewood Historical Society.

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MEETINGS

The Lakewood Historical Society formed in 1998 to preserve and share Lakewood's rich history through programs, displays and publications. The Society offers frequent programs on topics of historical interest. Most programs are free and open to the public. Visit us on Facebook or our website for information on events and activities:

www.LakewoodHistorical.org



Ed Voie

President's Message

Wow, 2023 was a memorable year. We had multiple events including three outstanding programs regarding the **1912 Titanic tragedy**, the **Amelia Earhart mystery** and our **Veterans Day Vietnam Tribute**. And **Ivan the Gorilla** continues to be a fan favorite exhibit!

We currently have a display dedicated to **Lakewood's Flora B. Tenzler Library** which I remember as a youngster walking to the newly opened library on Wildaire Road. Previously, library patrons used a space in the old Park Lodge Elementary School.

I want to thank all of our volunteers, our donors, and the City of Lakewood. This is truly your museum with more of our historical markers to be placed this new year.

It is an honor to be your president. I have a great team of Board members who care deeply about sharing our past and we look forward to Lakewood's future.

GAME FARM, from page 1

miles from their home in Wisconsin, thereby doing his part to increase the American presence in the northern Oregon Territory, the disputed ownership of which had a few years earlier brought Britain and the United States to the brink of war.



Historical marker bearing the names of Byrd family members buried in their namesake cemetery—from patriarch Adam to infant Ollie.

Adam didn't get to enjoy his new status as a landowner for long, however, dying less than a year later on April 26, 1853. His burial site on the homestead became the first in what is still known as the **Byrd Family Cemetery**. In later years, pioneers from other families were also interred there—about 100 graves in all by 1881. The cemetery fell into disuse soon thereafter. —Article to be continued in our Spring 2024 issue

Our thanks to Clover Park Rotary for its article on the history of the game farm, published on the Suburban Times website Nov. 23, 2023, the source of most of the facts reported here.

Century-Old Woodbrook Hunt Club Gets Historical Marker

Story by Phil Raschke, photo by Glen Spieth

The **Woodbrook Hunt Club** located at 6206 150th Street SW was officially formed in 1923, but its heritage dates back to 1892 and the Tacoma Riding Club. The early popularity of the club was based on what was known as “Drag Hunts”. These hunts featured fox-scented burlap bags being dragged across the ground by mounted riders to allow for trailing hunting hounds to follow. The popularity of these events created a need for a more formal structure to support fundraising for animal care and special social activities associated with this sport.

A board was created in 1928 with **Bill Hudson** as the first President. In 1998 the Club was placed on the National Register of Historical sites. Changes have occurred over the years, but the Club is still in operation today with **Sharon Scott** of University Place serving as President.

For additional information contact the **Master of Foxhounds** at **425-417-4003**.



Woodbrook Hunt Club President **Sharon Scott** poses with the Club's recently placed historical marker.

Prairie Gazette Makes It's Way to the Cayman Islands!

by Phil Raschke



Enjoying the Fort George photo op are Lakewood's **Lonnie Lai** and **Ray Miller** of Red Deer, Alberta.

The Cayman Islands are comprised of three islands with the largest being Grand Cayman, which is host to George Town, the capitol and main port.

The islands are due south of Cuba and have a population of about 75,000 with 35,000 residing in George Town. The Caymans are a self governing British Overseas Territory. Amazingly, these small islands are home to over 600 banks with 43 of the 50 largest banks in the world located on the islands. The islands are also blessed with fabulous beaches and scuba diving.

A small fort was built on Grand Cayman around 1790 to defend the locals from Spanish marauders operating out of Cuba. In World War II the fort had a wooden tower which was manned 24 hours a day on lookout for Axis submarines.

A small, non-marauding party of Lakewood History Society members and a Canadian friend took delight in introducing the island to the latest edition of the *Prairie Gazette*, the Society's official publication.

WELCOME...

New Members:

Charles O'Farrell

John O'Farrell

...and *THANK YOU!*

Donors:

Marilyn Arndt

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Dave Gibson Wins Daniel Ford Autographed Book

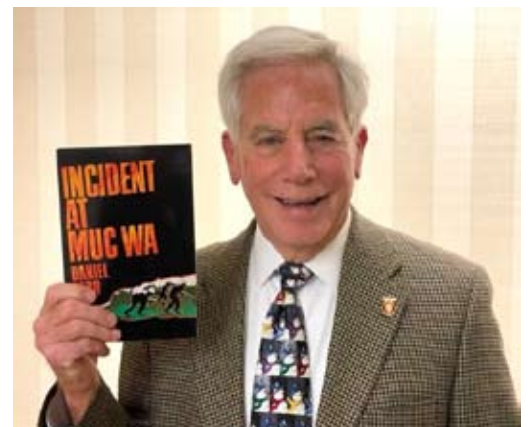
By Phil Raschke

The Lakewood History Museum's Veterans Day program featured the acclaimed Vietnam film "Go Tell the Spartans" starring Burt Lancaster. The movie was based on Daniel Ford's riveting book titled "Incident at Muc Wa".

In collaboration with Daniel Ford, a specially autographed copy of his book was made available for a drawing held at the conclusion of the film. Winner of the drawing was **Dave Gibson** (*right*) of Olympia.

Dave is a retired Air Force Colonel and the former National Commander of the Military Order of World Wars (MOWW).

Congratulations to Dave and thank you Dan Ford!



Check www.lakewoodhistorical.org for notices about upcoming programs