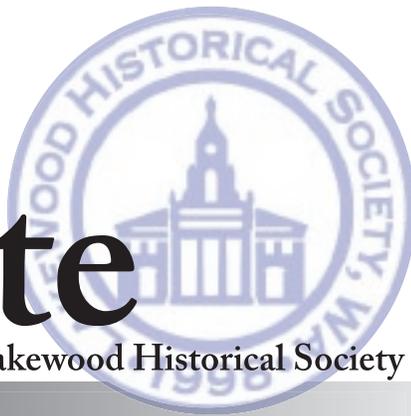




# Prairie Gazette

Spring • 2020 •

Official Publication, Lakewood Historical Society



Take care, but take heart—

## We've been through this before

*Red Cross nurses making masks that, unbeknownst to them, were of no use against a virus.*



*Steve Dunkelberger looks back at the last great pandemic to hit the U.S.—the so-called “Spanish Flu” of 1918—and how it affected life in our region.*

What started out as a group of soldiers listed on sick call at a Midwest training base would lead to a pandemic that would kill more people than the Great War it helped end. It would then disappear and leave a wake of changes in the cities and towns it affected.

### Tacoma and Pierce County would not be spared.

The medical drama of 1918-1919 that played out between the first coughs and the final headlines of no more cases of the killer flu a year later involves warnings about the perils of global travel and the limitations of public health.

This is the story of the “**Spanish Flu**” that would claim 5 percent of the world’s population and infect one of every five people on the planet a century ago.

Flash back to the waning days of the First World War for a moment. **Camp Lewis** (today’s Joint Base Lewis-McChord) was just a year old and was busy hammering newly minted soldiers for battle in the trenches “over there.”

Although the origins of what became known as the “Spanish Flu” aren’t fully known, what is clear is that it wasn’t in Spain. Its “Spanish” moniker only came

*See FLU, pg. 3*

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*Sue Scott*

## **President's Message**

The Lakewood History Museum has been closed for the past several weeks and now we are waiting for the Governor to lift the quarantine so we can reopen. We recently contracted with a museum consultant for an exhibit development plan to get the museum "put back together"! We will keep you informed on those plans.

This quarantine has also stopped our plans for the membership renewals. We hope to get those letters out by early May. Of course, programs are on hold along with the proposed City of Lakewood Night Market.

We are waiting for the day we can throw open the doors and welcome everyone back! Please stay safe and wash your hands! As **Steve Dunkelberger's** article states, we've been through this before and we will survive.

### **PRAIRIE GAZETTE**

Prairie Gazette is the official publication of the Lakewood Historical Society. The newsletter is published four times a year. Distribution is directly to members and available at the Lakewood History Museum, 6114 Motor Avenue SW, Lakewood, WA 98499 • 253-682-3480

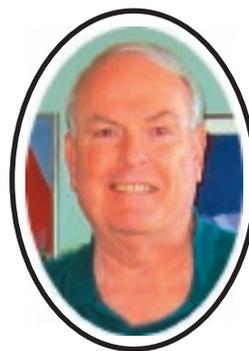
The staff of Prairie Gazette actively encourages input from the Society's members as well as the general public regarding story ideas of any other aspects of this newsletter, and the Lakewood Historical Society.

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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](http://www.LakewoodHistorical.org)



I want to inform you of the unexpected passing of our longtime Treasurer, **Jim Curley**, in February. Jim kept us on the straight and narrow and will be sorely missed.

**Jim** was retired from the Army, then worked for Tacoma Public Utilities. Our condolences to his wife, **Linda**.

FLU from page 1.

because that nation was the first major country to report its cases. America, Britain, Germany and France censored war-time reporting of the illness marching through their ranks under the idea that such news would hurt morale and give aid to the enemy.

One prevailing theory of the flu's origin is that the particularly dangerous and contagious strain of the influenza had originated in Kansas in February 1918 after it had mutated and jumped from pigs to humans. During an outbreak there, a soldier went on leave in Kansas' Haskell County and returned to duty to Camp Funston, which was a section of Fort Riley. Within the month of his return, more than 1,000 soldiers there came down with the flu. Some of the soldiers, unfortunately, had already shipped out to other military installations before they felt too sick to train, bringing the ailment with them. Hundreds of soldiers and military workers then fell ill around the world. Those vast numbers then brought the contagious disease to the civilian population.

The regular flu came to Camp Lewis in March 1918, but the cases were largely unremarkable with the soldiers recovering quickly before returning to their training. That luck was not to hold out. News of a devastating flu season was just reaching newspapers. Then the 91st Division left the training fields of Camp Lewis for combat in France in the early summer. Those soldiers were quickly replaced with the newly formed 13th Division. That division drew its members from around the nation, particularly from Eastern and Southern states that had been experiencing flu outbreaks. They brought the flu with them. A trainload of sail-

ors from Philadelphia came to Bremerton's Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, for example, and immediately overwhelmed the military hospitals there. Then Camp Lewis' hospital beds filled up following the first 11 influenza cases appearing in local hospital records on Sept. 21, 1918. Flu infections then jumped to 1,450 and then 3,024 in a matter of weeks.



November 11, 1918: Giant American flag on Tacoma's Perkins Building celebrates the end of World War I. Crowd is small, however, due to the ban on public assemblies caused by the influenza crisis. Photo courtesy Tacoma Public Library



Anyone in Pierce County who "took real sick" from the 1918 flu would likely have been sent here: the first St. Joseph's Hospital—located, as its modern incarnation is today, in Tacoma's "Hilltop" neighborhood.

Alarm bells rattled at military bases around the nation. All suffered from the strains of sick and dying soldiers. Camp Lewis would close to civilians for an entire month, in the hopes that limiting access would stop the flu from spreading. Tacoma, likewise, would ban public gatherings, public school classes, public funerals and concerts, much like other cities.

"Baffled by a medical catastrophe like no other, the board has little good news for the governor or the public," the Washington State Board of Health reported to the governor in its annual report. "The Spanish flu in Washington has taken 4,879 lives in the last three months of 1918, of whom more than half were adults between the ages of 20 and 39... The

character of this disease is such that we are in the dark, to a large extent, as to a means to prevent its spread...

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**"We know of no way at present whereby we can detect a 'carrier' of influenza germs. In fact, we are in extreme doubt as to what germ is responsible for this disease."**

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Keep in mind that the prevailing medical opinion of the day was that the flu was caused by a bacteria that could be filtered from being inhaled through

See FLU on pg. 6

# Lakewood Historical Society Members Visit Australia's "Shine of Remembrance"

Story and Photos by Phil Raschke



View from front of Shrine facing toward downtown Melbourne.

On a recent trip, LHS members **Bob Lawrence** and **Phil Raschke** visited the historic "Shrine of Remembrance" in Melbourne, Australia.

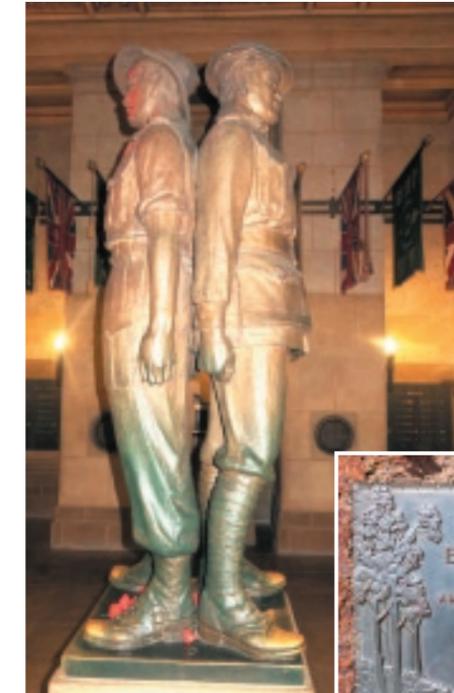
The Shrine was originally built to honor the men and women who served in WW I, but now honors all Australians who served in any war.

The foundation stone for the Shrine was laid on 11 November 1927. Official dedication occurred on 11 November 1934 and was attended by over 300,000 people. Today, the Shrine is the location of annual observances on ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) Day (April 25) and Remembrance Day (November 11).

Inside the Shrine there is a special sanctuary which houses a marble "Stone of Remembrance". The stone is engraved with the biblical phrase "GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN".

Once a year at 11 a.m. on November 11, a single ray of sunlight shines through an aperture in the roof. The ray lights up just the word "LOVE" inscribed on the marble stone. Beneath the sanctuary is a crypt containing a striking bronze statue of two soldiers standing back to back. One soldier is a WW I father, the other is his WW II son.

The Shrine also serves as a military museum with panels listing every Australian unit that served in the Imperial Forces along with artifacts from major military engagements.



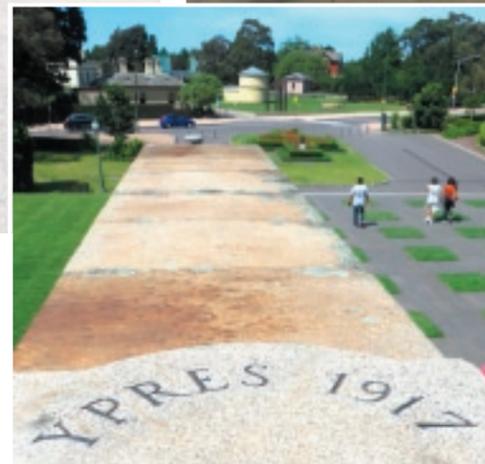
The bronze "Father and Son" statue.



Bob Lawrence (L) and Phil Raschke with members of the Australian Honor Guard that watch over the Shrine.



Front view of Shrine with 1927 dedication stone.



Tribute to World War I "Battle of Ypres" in Flanders Field, Belgium.



Stone honoring Edward George Honey (1885-1922) who first suggested the solemn ceremony of "Silence" be observed in remembrance of those lost in war.



Left: The compass from the German cruiser Emden captured by the cruiser HMAS Sidney during the "Battle of Cocos Islands".

Below: The marble "Remembrance" stone.



the use of cotton masks. These gauze masks actually did little to control the contagious nature of the flu, which is actually a virus that can easily pass through such protection.

Tacoma Mayor Riddell didn't help matters by proclaiming the city was flu free long before the butcher's bill reached its end.

But the quick and bold action of other officials at least did something since the state ranked at the bottom of the list of 30 states that reported massive flu outbreaks. Only Oregon reported a lower mortality rate from the ailment, most likely because it had much fewer soldiers and sailors flowing into its borders during the peak of the pandemic as America fought a two-front war. One war was in the trenches of Europe. The other one hid behind every sneeze and every cough, often killing within hours.

Camp Lewis and Tacoma were actually under a ban of public gathering when news of the armistice sparked celebrations in the streets around the world. Some defied the order and attended last-minute parties, but many just stayed home in hopes they could avoid getting the flu from the revelers.

Flu cases would trickle in ones and twos for another a year and a half until the pandemic was officially declared over. It would claim several notable local martyrs. A singer by the name of **Linnie Love** was among them. The nationally known soprano was booked to perform a spat of shows at Camp Lewis with her costar **Lorna Lea** right as the



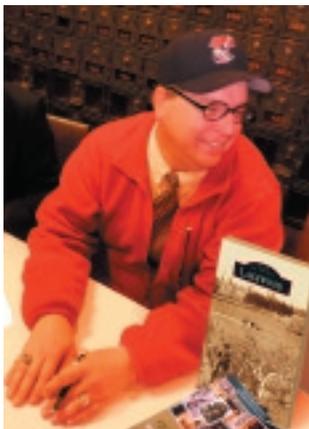
Prominent local victims of the 1918 pandemic: Linnie Love (above, left) and Father Peter Francis Hylebos.

flu pandemic had filled local hospital beds. They were offered the chance to cancel the shows because of the quarantine but held to the performer's credo that the "show must go on." That loyalty to their craft would lead to Love's death, however. The duet would perform for the bedridden soldiers only to both fall ill from influenza. Lea would recover. Love would not. She would die on Nov. 12, the day after the war ended. She had performed dozens of shows during the previous two weeks. She reported feeling ill and died days later. She is one of the 164 flu deaths tied to Camp Lewis' flu outbreak.

One of Tacoma's first resident priests would also fall victim to the flu because of his devotion to his flock. **Father Peter Francis Hylebos**, who came to the city in 1880 to serve as the first pastor to St. Leo's Parish, was one of the most prominent local victims. He passed away of flu-induced pneumonia on Nov. 28, 1918, the day he was scheduled to deliver a Thanksgiving service at the Rialto Theater. About 500 Tacomans would die of the flu, although the exact number will never be known since reporting standards were not universally followed and varied between hospitals. Most of those

deaths occurred in the fall of 1918, but some would trickle in well into the following spring, long after the pandemic was largely deemed to have passed. That fact further clouds the effort to determine a definitive body count.

**But keep in mind that more American soldiers died of influenza than in combat; 57,000 to 53,000, respectively.**



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Our thanks to **Steve Dunkelberger**, founding member of the Lakewood Historical Society and the co-author of two books about Lakewood, as well as one book about McNeil Island. He also presents on local history in bars, restaurants, online and in retirement homes under the banner **Steve's Drunk History**, which you can follow on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## Historical Markers of Lakewood: 5th in a Series

# *The Heath Farm, 1844-1849*

Our featured marker, placed on the grounds of Western State Hospital in 2016, displays a reproduction of a painting of Joseph Heath and reads as follows:

**Joseph Thomas Heath** was born on September 22, 1804 in Exeter, England. On Sept. 21, 1843 he signed a contract with the Puget Sound Agricultural Co. (Hudson's Bay Co.) and left Cherbourg, France for the Pacific Northwest.



Lakewood Mayor Don Anderson (in dark jacket) speaks at the Heath Farm marker dedication ceremony.

Sailing on the British ship "Cowlitz" around the horn of South America to Hawaii, he arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River on June 1, 1844. On June 17, the "Cowlitz" arrived at Fort Nisqually. Heath moved into an existing log house and barn that was built and abandoned by one of the Red River (Canada) settlers about 1840.

In the next five years, Heath built a granary, barn, corn shed, Dutch barn, smoke house, kitchen, tool house, dairy, pig sty and an ox shed. He fenced his yard and another 40 acres. Heath kept a very detailed diary, however, only part of it survived. Much of the diary from Jan. 1, 1845 until he became sick on Feb. 9, 1849 still exists. Heath died at the age of 44 just after the end of the diary. He was buried at Fort Nisqually in an unmarked grave.

After Heath's death, a U.S. mounted artillery unit, Company M, arrived, leased and later purchased the property from Hudson's Bay Co. In August of 1849, Fort Steilacoom was established using the Heath's Farm log buildings. Heath's house became the Fort Adjutant's (HQ) office. As the Fort grew the log buildings were replaced. Heath's log house was located very close to this historic marker.

Joseph T. Heath marker provided by the Lakewood Historical Society and the City of Lakewood.

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## Recent Donors

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Donations in memory of James E. Curley

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