

## **2002 ANNUAL MEETING**

Ilwaco, WA, October 4-6

**Theme: "The Columbia Meets the Pacific: Fishing Villages, Summer Resorts, and Coastal Fortifications."**

Chapter members met for the first time on the Long Beach Peninsula, an environmentally and culturally diverse setting in the far southwest corner of Washington State. The 2002 conference was held on October 4-6 and was centered in the small town of Ilwaco (population 876), center of a one-time thriving fishing industry at the mouth of the Columbia River. Forty-six members and guests attended all or some of the conference events, which were held at several venues on the peninsula and along the river. The Chapter welcomed registrants from British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California.

The organizing theme of the conference was "The Columbia Meets the Pacific: Fishing Villages, Summer Resorts, and Coastal Fortifications," and attendees were treated to visits, tours, and lectures illuminating each of the stated subjects. Early Friday evening members gathered at the restored Colbert House in Ilwaco, where Ryan Carlson, interpretive specialist with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, provided background information on the fisherman's family that occupied the house for over a century and the role of State Parks in the restoration of the property in 1995.

From the Colbert House members walked a few blocks, past late nineteenth-century vernacular houses - some intact, some greatly altered, to the Ilwaco Heritage Museum, site of the opening reception. The museum exhibits were open for viewing before a light buffet supper was served in the great hall. After the meal, two speakers who contributed to the Historic Structure Report for the Colbert House gave presentations. Caroline Gallacci, Ph.D., provided an historical overview of Ilwaco and the Long Beach Peninsula, noting especially the rise and decline of Columbia River fishing and illustrating some of the grand old resort hotels that once graced the peninsula's ocean front. Gene Grulich, A.I.A., spoke about the investigation process and problems encountered during the restoration of the Colbert House, a simple one and one-half story building of plank construction, begun about 1872 and expanded by large additions in 1891 and 1896.

Saturday morning members traveled about ten miles upriver to the State Historical Park at Fort Columbia. Three scholarly papers were presented during the morning session. Helen Edwards' presentation, "Wildwood Avenue, Victoria's Neighborhood Development in Microcosm," recounted the results of a very detailed investigation of a small area of the city, illuminating every-day history in the neighborhood's changing residential architecture. Grant Hildebrand revealed the mystery behind the title of his presentation, "Two Medieval Norwegian Stave Churches in the Pacific Northwest," by illuminating the possible antecedents for

the structural systems of two residences designed by Seattle architect Arne Bystrom, F.A.I.A. The final presentation, "It's Not All Concrete," was a rapid overview of "six-thousand years of fortification history" by David Hansen, Historic Preservation Officer for Washington State Parks, and served as introduction and background for a comprehensive walking tour of Fort Columbia, which followed the paper session. Planned in 1864 and mostly constructed 1896-19904, Fort Columbia is one of three coastal fortifications that defended the mouth of the Columbia River and is the most intact of the three.

Following lunch in the fort's Theater, a restored and converted ordinance storehouse, President Martin Segger presided at the annual general meeting. Reports of various committees were duly tendered; members applauded Helen Edwards for launching the chapter's new web site; Treasurer Shirley Courtois presented the summary financial statement for 2001 and acknowledged the continuing contributions of Wendell Lovett to the Lovett Fund for young scholars. President Segger noted that the 2003 conference and annual general meeting would be held in Victoria, B.C.

The afternoon bus tour, led by Secretary Michael Houser, transported members through the Long Beach Peninsula resort towns of Seaview, Long Beach, and Ocean Park, where turn-of-the-century summer cottages were the prevailing features. At Klipsan Beach, a lengthy stop allowed a thorough investigation of the grounds and interior of the large summer home of Portland's Shogren Family. Discussion centered on the beam-and-plank construction of this 1908 building, designed by noted Portland architect A.E. Doyle, and the continued use of this structural system earlier observed in the Colbert House. From Klipsan Beach the bus continued to Oysterville, the northernmost town on the east side of the peninsula, facing Willapa Bay. A walking tour of the historic district, which encompasses most of the town, began with a visit to the interior of the Oysterville Church (1892), where Gene Grulich explained his work in guiding the Oysterville Restoration Foundation as it seeks to restore and maintain the building. The foundation's Vice-President, Gloria Freshley, then led a tour of the interior of the Tom Crellin House (1869), the oldest remaining structure in the town. A leisurely walk through the historic district and along the bay shore - where several platted blocks that once contained houses and business have been reclaimed by the sea - brought the group to the town's 1930's cannery, still a thriving enterprise today. An explanation of local oyster harvesting and the role of the cannery was given by co-owner Katherine Driscoll, a member of the Oysterville Design Review Board. The tour concluded at the one-room schoolhouse (1907), now a community center, where champagne and oysters were served to the delight of the assembled guests.

Saturday's full-day schedule culminated with the traditional evening banquet, held at The Rebecca Inn overlooking the Ilwaco harbor. The speaker of honor was Hal Kalman, Ph.D., a longtime Regional Delegate of the Chapter representing British Columbia. Mr. Kalman is principal of the Vancouver, B.C., office of Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited, and he has consulted on and guided projects to

restore and rehabilitate historic properties around the globe. His illustrated talk, "Conservation in China, North American Style," introduced us to the distinctive vernacular architecture of another country. His work there reminded us that architectural history does not stop at an analysis of form, precedents, or influences, and that preservation of that history involves a broad understanding of culture, economics, politics, and personal relationships.

Taking a cue from the successful Sunday car caravan tour initiated at the Central Oregon meeting last year, this year's Sunday tour followed the same format, departing from the Port of Ilwaco and traversing a route eastward along the north bank of the Columbia River. The first stop brought the group to St. Mary's church, the lone survivor of the once-thriving community of McGowan. A simple building, constructed in 1904, the church is preserved in its original state through the continuing efforts of St. Mary's parish in Seaview. Some of the group stopped to view the impressive Astoria Bridge (1966) from the Washington shore, while others took a detour across the four-mile-long bridge and a brief turnaround on the Oregon side. The next stop was the Knappton Cove Heritage Center, originally a riverfront cannery that was converted to a quarantine station in 1899. A privately owned museum is now housed in the former hospital building. After striking inland through the Naselle River valley and the Finnish-American immigrant community of Naselle, the north bank road returned to the Columbia River at Skamokawa where the group toured the River Life Interpretive Center housed in the former schoolhouse (1894). The Sunday excursion concluded in Cathlamet with a brief visit to the Pioneer Church (1895) and a buffet lunch at the Bradley House (1907). Members heading home on a southerly route took advantage of the unseasonably sunny weather to ride the private ferry from Puget Island to the Oregon shore, thus concluding a most pleasurable day on the Columbia River.