



Benn's Bulletin

A Publication of *The Friends of the Aberdeen Museum*

July 2011

Coming Events

Aberdeen Museum Board
Meeting
First Tuesday of each month
Aberdeen Museum
7:00 p.m.

Friends of the Aberdeen Museum
Meeting
Third Tuesday of each month
Aberdeen Museum
7:00 p.m.

Gene Woodwick

honored as
Aberdeen Museum's
"Harborite of the Year"

Dinner will be Held

October 8, 2011
Aberdeen Museum
111 East Third St.

Tickets: \$20.00
on sale

August 1, 2011.

for information call
(360) 533-1976

Life Without Lipstick

The Marie Adams Story



***"When I volunteered for the Philippines
they told me I was too old...
guess I showed them."***

Who would have imagined that a spindly little girl named Marie Adams, from North Dakota would become one of the top news stories in Aberdeen during WWII, and then disappear, buried in dark dusty U.S. Government and American Red Cross filing cabinets.

Marie was born and raised in Lisbon, North Dakota. Although blind in her left eye from the time of birth, she never thought of it as a handicap. Graduating from Lisbon High School with honors in 1909, she went on to attend Milwaukee-Downer College, graduating in 1914, than on to Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy.

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Aberdeen Museum of History

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Happenings at the Museum

On February 25, 2011 the main boiler if the Armory gave up the ghost. Over the next few weeks the thermometer did not register of 36 degrees Fahrenheit (for people who use the Metric System that would be 2.222222222222223 Celsius); definitely a bit chilly. Somewhat of a self-proclaimed conservationist I amazingly discovered myself calling upon a number of museum spirits to bring a touch of global-warming to this part of Washington.

Aberdeen Parks and Recreation Director Karl Harris assures that the museum will have heat no-later-than September 1, 2011.

Speaking of spirits; on Saturday night, April 9, 2011 a group from the Paranormal Investigators of Historic America (PIHA) visited the museum. Arriving at 7:00 p.m. to setup, their research began at 8:00 p.m., using some interesting equipment such as infra-red cameras, K2 sensors to measure electro-magnetic fields, electronic thermometers, as well as motion detectors, and parabolic-disc to record sound not detectable by human ears, continued until 1:30 a.m. Sunday Morning. The 89 year old Armory without a doubt is home to an abundance of paranormal activity.

Through the course of the night contacts were made consisting of acknowledgement to questions by knocks, activation of motion detectors, heat sensors as well as physical movement of objects. One response to a question occurred in the museum's theater, when a seat was literally slammed into the upright position. However the highlight of the evening was when a pouch containing small digital audio recorders were thrown approximately

twenty feet behind where we sat in a circle amongst furniture from the late lumber schooner *Wawona*. These were not the first paranormal occurrences experiences by museum personnel, or Coastal Community Action Program employees. Other incidents involved voices in hallways, artifacts moved from their locations and volunteers being poked or touched. On one occasion I was informed by a visitor that she had seen a small girl near the farm display, and another visiting couple's 4 year old did not want to enter the museum. Later they asked if the museum was haunted, and informed me their son was very sensitive to paranormal activity. All this took place before PIHA's investigation.

I know there are numerous people in the community who might think this was a stunt to get the museum's name in the media, but let me assure you that it wasn't. First of all the PIHA contacted us. Second; I withheld most of the information you read in these paragraphs from the investigators, and third; I invited two skeptical area Disc Jockeys from KXRO; Phil Luce and Pat Anderson as outside observers. All-in-all we had a very eventful evening.

The museum has been contacted by another group of paranormal investigators and we are working on scheduling a visit. If there are museum members or residents interested in participating as an outside observer, we will have two openings. Contact the Aberdeen Museum for the date and time.

On a more serious note: I would like to thank all the museum volunteers and board members for their valuable

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In Loving Memory

Anne Krulich - February, 2011

Mahlon Chestnut - April, 2011

The Women of Grays Harbor History

are seeking volunteers that would like to research, write or portray women of Grays Harbor during special programs.

If you are interested call:

(360) 533-1976



*Marie Adams, 4 Months old
born in Lisbon, ND*



*Marie's faculty photograph from the
J.M. Weatherwax 1919 year
yearbook "The Quiniault."*

In 1918 Marie moved to Aberdeen, possibly as companionship for her sister Gertrude whose husband, Dr. John B. Kinne, a prominent local Physician, was serving overseas in the Medical Corps during WWI. Marie and her sister both volunteered to make and roll bandages for the Aberdeen Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Fall of 1919 found Marie employed as a faculty member at Weatherwax Sr. High School, teaching History, and over her eleven years as a resident of Aberdeen held a number of positions to include: Office manager for George Wolff, Administrative Assistant at Oak Hurst Sanatorium, and finally Field Director of the Aberdeen Chapter of the American Red Cross. Securing a position with her Alma Mater, Maria returned to Milwaukee-Downer College in 1931, spending the next eight years as the institute's Executive secretary

In 1939 Marie once again entered the service of the American Red Cross, and during 1940, with war clouds looming on all horizons she was assigned as a hospital social worker at Fort Ord, California and Letterman General Hospital at the Presidio in San Francisco. In 1941 at the age of fifty she volunteered for service in the Philippines, sailing from San Francisco on October 11th, and arriving at Fort McKinley, seven miles south of Manila November 4th. There wasn't much feeling of tension or anticipation of war in Manila, and she was shocked by the old fashioned and utterly inadequate equipment. There as she was planning the fast growing recreation programs for the hospital, the utter



Marie Adams, (first row seated 5th from right) at Letterman Hospital, with 57 of the 66 military nurses captured by the Japanese during the invasion of the Philippine Islands, January, 1942.

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chaos and confusion of war struck. Sunday, December 7th the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, two days later they dropped their first bombs on Fort McKinley at 3 o'clock in the morning. "I shall never forget awakening to that horrendous noise and confusion." Marie recalled during her later years. "The air was filled with deafening sounds of exploding bombs; the sky was filled with red tracers, anti-aircraft fire and the roar of Japanese planes overhead."

Before dawn, ambulances brought the wounded from nearby Nielsen Field, hospital rooms and halls became nearly impassable. Marie worked fourteen and fifteen hour days—always under bombing attacks—distributing Red Cross comfort supplies, helping wounded men write messages and performing any small services which might add to their mental and physical comfort.

After the last man had been evacuated from Fort McKinley hospital, Marie moved to Manila continuing her work in the many emergency hospitals units set up by the Army and Navy, driving from one hospital to another even through the severest raids.

The Canaco Navy Hospital had been moved from Cavite to Santa Escolastica College, and at the request of the Commanding Officer, Marie remained, even though Manila was rapidly falling into the hands of the Japanese army.

It was here on January 3, 1942 she was taken as military prisoner, probably the first civilian woman captive taken during WWII. Foresightedly she had arranged for transfer of Red Cross comfort and medical supplies to her new station,

which proved invaluable to medical staff and wounded prisoners she served.

On May 9, 1942, with the transfer of military prisoners from Santa Escolastica to other camps or to work battalions, Marie was moved to Santo Tomas Civilian Internment Camp; where close to 4,000 people were crowded into surrounding grounds.

Marie immediately identified herself with the hospital which was staffed and run by prisoners. Here with the help of 12 assistances, she acted as liaison between the Camp Health Administration and Japanese civil authorities on matters pertaining to the hospital. She maintained detailed records on health conditions and mortalities required by the Japanese civilian government as well as supervising recreation and welfare activities boosting the morale of all internees.

During the first year, the internee camp administrators set up a reserve of staple foods which was carefully conserved. Vegetables from camp gardens and permitted outside purchases from local vendors in Manila prisoners were able to supplement their diets.

In July of 1942 the Japanese Government assumed full financial responsibility for the camp. However, it was still under civilian authority.

In December, 1943, the Japanese civilian authorities allowed delivery of Red Cross food parcels, permitting the distribution of four eleven-pound parcels to each prisoner. "We rationed out the supplies to last us a year," Marie said, "and without that small supplement to our diet, many would have died of starvation or



Photographs taken on the day of Santo Tomas Internment Camp liberation, February 3, 1945



Marie Adams (left) assisting fellow internee the day after camp liberation. At the time this photograph was taken Marie only weighed 95 lbs.



Taken in her office at Oakland Naval Hospital where she was American Red Cross Field Director.

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POW women washing their hair. All hygiene facilities were outside.



Santo Tomas, February 7, 1945. Internees suffering from illnesses due to starvation waiting to be evacuated.



*February 20, 1947
two years after an impromptu ceremony held on a battered airfield in Manila, Maj. Gen. George P. Hays presents the Bronze Star Medal to Marie during a formal retreat at the Presidio of San Francisco*

malnutrition.” Of equal value was the bulk shipment of medical supplies—vitamins, ether, surgical gauze, blood plasma. “In many cases, we administered blood plasma as a substitute for food,” Marie explained.” We had been giving spinal anesthetics because we had no ether and the new supply—sent to us by the American Red Cross—was a godsend.

In February of 1944, Japan began to lose ground. Santo Tomas’ Japanese civilian administration was supplanted by a military administration and immediately contact with all shops, canteens and sources of food supplies from the outside were cut off. Living conditions began to decline drastically as prisoners were faced with meager and continually decreasing Japanese rations. With every Japanese military defeat rations were withheld until the per capita Japanese ration amounted to about one-quarter of the normal calorie intake required to sustain health. As protests were registered with Japanese military officials on decrease in food, Marie kept complete files on all conversation and correspondence. By early 1945 records indicated that the camp’s mortality rate had reached two deaths a day.

“We were hungry; we were starved, she wrote.” “When I went to bed at night, I felt just on the brink of screaming.” Everyone was stooped with fatigue, young and old alike suffered from diseases brought on by starvation. Many had horrible skin conditions. Tropical ulcers and boils were developing everywhere; infections were on the increase. During the last few months there was a tension among the internees that was almost indescribable. Irritability is a sign of starvation. Infusions of blood plasma were given to those with severe cases of Beri-Beri a dreadful disease caused by diet deficiency.

In four days time they were nearly normal. Marie was quickly growing weak, due to a rare blood type she had given too many transfusions, and she only weighed 95 pounds. At one point doctors determined she would only last 4 or 5 more days. It was true determination that kept her going.

For some weeks there had been news via the ‘grapevine,’ of allied landings on Luzon. Medical staff calculated that very few would survive another month. The evening of February 3, was heralded by distant sounds of sniping and the rumble of tanks and an electric excitement settled over the camp. At 9:05 p.m. the first American tank crashed through the gates, and the internees, tears running down their cheeks, hoisted the American servicemen to their shoulders, cheering and weeping. Among the first to enter camp were three Red Cross men, bringing all sorts of comfort articles and over 4,000 messages from home. For most, it was the first word they had received in over three years. Some of the internees felt that they had been forgotten.

Frequently during the week following liberation, the Japanese shelled the camp, cutting short the brief period of freedom for many of the internees. Again Adams worked in the wards, among the wounded, bringing them whatever comfort and ease from pain she could.

On February 12, 1945, relieved from duty by Red Cross workers coming in with the troops, Marie left Santo Tomas, and along with 66 other valiant Army and Navy nurses, was flown to Letterman Naval Hospital in San Francisco.

*For more information
visit the new
Marie Adams Exhibit
now open at
The Aberdeen Museum
or call:
(360) 533-1976*

Happenings *continued from page 2*

time and effort. If you were to meet them out roaming the community you would never suspect they were the behind-the-scene dynamos of the museum. They do not wear banners and medals on their chests or hash-marks or hearts on their sleeves. Some have been with the Aberdeen Museum since its beginning; some not quite so long, and those who help periodically with annual and special events. Their tireless dedication never ceases to amaze me.

The museum often benefits from students that volunteer needing to fulfill their community service hours required to graduate. This year we were blessed by the presence of four outstanding High School Volunteers: Hoquiam sophomores Aaron Wilson, and Seth Madison. Among other chores these energetic young men refurbished the museum's aging

theater screen. Representing J.M. Weatherwax (Aberdeen) High School: Seniors Brittney Deakin and Krista Noble took on the ominous project of building the Marie Adams display. This dynamic duo completed their own research establishing a time-line, and modified a mannequin to fit a 1940's Red Cross uniform on which to display Marie's services awards and decorations. Thanks too all four students for a job well done. Also a Special Thanks goes out to Brittney's mom who procured an American Red Cross flag for use in the exhibit. Emily Airhart and Sharon Eager also donated time from their schedule to add some finishing touches to the Adam's exhibit.

Over the past months museum volunteers and board members encountered some serious health issues. We are thankful to report that: Leonard Airhart, LaMont Shillinger, and John

Erak are all on their way to good recoveries.

It has been another difficult year for everyone. The staff and volunteers at the museum would like museum members and donors to know we appreciate all gifts received to date. For those who haven't sent a donation and would like too, there is still time. No matter how big or small, all gifts are important to your museum.



The
Aberdeen
Museum
of
History

*“Where
Learning
Lasts a
Lifetime”*

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