

— COVID-19 — Impacts Museum Openings for 2020

As of this printing, BMHS is waiting for the state to allow museums to open and to provide additional guidelines specific to our industry. During a pandemic, museums face many unique operating challenges. As we consider opening our Smith Hollow Country Schoolhouse, the Palus Museum, the Columbia County Veteran's Display, and the Dodge Quarantine Cabin, here are some main issues we are evaluating:

- We have to consider how to maintain proper cleaning and disinfecting without damaging any items on display—you can't wipe down a World War II uniform with a Clorox wipe.
- Since our spaces are small, maintaining the required six-feet of physical distancing between visitors presents a challenge. Only a few visitors at a time can be accommodated and group tours will not be allowed.
- To protect displayed items and staff, visitors will need to wear masks and gloves, which we are required to purchase and provide.
- Staffing will be very limited. Our organization runs 100% on volunteers and nearly all of them are over 65 years-of-age. Consequently, in view of health concerns, our volunteer base has temporarily diminished. We are extremely thankful for our volunteers and do not want to put them at risk.

• Funding sources have been interrupted. Although costs to operate remain consistent, our normal fundraising efforts have been delayed and/or have had to be cancelled.

In spite of these many challenges, we are moving forward and looking ahead to when regular operations can resume.

We have been busy cataloging donations, reworking displays, taking care of maintenance, and developing our state-required, written COVID-19 Pandemic Reopening Safety Plan.

Finally, to everyone, we say "thank-you" for your continued support. Stay safe, and be well!

Sunday, November 20, 1881

Dear Students and Parents:

By now you know that the smallpox outbreak in the City of Dayton has turned into an epidemic. That area is now under strict quarantine: no one is allowed to go into or leave the city. All schools in town are closed. Our schoolhouse is now closed, too.

Before you become excited about there being no school, remember on Friday I sent you home with your text books and slates. Each day, please read several pages in your books, practice your penmanship, and work on doing sums.

Currently, I am able to help care for patients in our rural area who suffer alone. I feel it is a great privilege to help others while I await our school's reopening.

Do not worry about your schoolmarm contracting smallpox. I had a mild case when I was young, thus making me immune to the disease. So I am protected from getting the smallpox again.

If someone in your home has smallpox, it is recommended that an outbuilding be cleansed and turned into a quarantine cabin for that family member to stay in. This will help stop the spread of this disease. Mothers, after caring for this member, wash your hands and change your apron before re-entering your home.

When this quarantine ends and we are again back together, we will share the many things we have all learned while apart.

Cordially and with good health and prayers,

Miss Edwards, Your Schoolmarm

#24 Smith Hollow School

Columbia County, Washington Territory



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Dayton, WA 99328

Blue Mountain Heritage Society
Dedicated to preserving the diverse history of southeastern Washington

Summer • 2020
Newsletter

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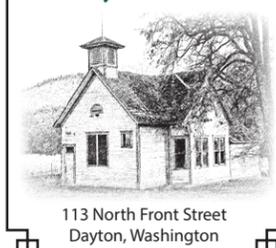
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Smith Hollow
Country Schoolhouse



113 North Front Street
Dayton, Washington

Blue Mountain
Heritage Society

— Board Meets Monthly —
2nd Thursday – 9:00 am

Delany Building
111 South Third Street
Dayton, Washington

Everyone is
Welcome!



Dodge 1898 Quarantine Cabin

— QUARANTINE — in Columbia County

by Paula Moisio, BMHS President and Roslyn Edwards, BMHS Vice-President

Of late, the word *quarantine* comes up often. Yet area history tells us that—for over a century—the word has experienced local cycles of frequent use. We are in one now.

As history repeats itself, we are currently caught up in the COVID-19 pandemic and its required quarantine process. In this newsletter, we feature quarantine stories from Dayton's past, starting with our popular exhibit, the Dodge Quarantine Cabin.

The cabin was built in 1889 by the Dodge family. At the end of the Spanish-American War, common practice was to quarantine returning soldiers as a precaution against diseases. During the war, yellow fever and typhoid claimed more lives than combat. While soldiers were anxious to return home, families and communities had to make sure it would be safe for them to do so.

This small cabin built



in the backyard of the Dodge property on Richmond Avenue in Dayton met the military's basic recommended quarantine practices.

Although small, the 13-by-13-foot cabin gave Private Wesley Dodge a place to convalesce while under quarantine. It provided the returning soldier with a place to sleep, eat, and read. Undoubtedly it was better than what the army offered. And Mom's home cooking would surely have been a welcome feast.

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President's Message

Epidemic? Or Pandemic? What's the Difference?

It comes down to size. By definition, an epidemic is a disease that affects many people at the same time, spreading from person to person in a locality where the disease is not permanently prevalent. In contrast, a pandemic is an epidemic that has spread over a large area. As a result, a pandemic is prevalent throughout an entire country, across an entire continent, or around the whole world.

There is, however, a consistent theme common to both: People persevere, treatments and cures are eventually found, lessons are learned, and life goes on.

As we all make our way through current trying times, there's comfort in knowing that our county, our state, our nation, and our world will persevere.

Every day as COVID-19 unfolds, we are seeing history in the making. Imagine looking back on this time in a year, a decade, a century. Think of the lives that will have been lost, the knowledge gained, the eventual outcome, and the long term ramifications.

Experiencing this current event while president of the Blue Mountain Heritage Society, I'm reminded why our mission to preserve the history of Southeastern Washington is important: We benefit from looking back; it aides us in moving forward into the future.

Paula Moio, President

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Blue Mountain Heritage Society

<https://bluemountainheritage.org>

Many of us (older) Americans remember stories of friends and family members who had contracted polio.

I recall, as a small child in California, making cards and pictures in Sunday school for children in iron lungs.

My uncle had contracted polio as a child. He wore leg braces for a long time, and then went on to fight in the Army during WW II at the Battle of the Bulge.

Tommy, of Walla Walla's Tommy's Dutch Lunch, was a prize fighter in Los Angeles during the height of the polio outbreaks. As an adult, he came down with a severe case of the disease. He and his wife had to return to Walla Walla and live with his in-laws while he healed. The family ran a little restaurant on West Pine Street and lived a block away. Soon, Tommy was well enough to help run the place. After the death of his wife's parents, Tommy and his wife continued to run the restaurant, which is still open today.

Recently, I interviewed Liz Hatfield Carson of Dayton, who recalls her home being quarantined during a polio outbreak. She remembers three cases in Dayton, though there could have been more. What put her family home into quarantine was the case of Leonard Hubbard.

Leonard's mother, recently divorced, needed a place to live with her children. So they moved into the Hatfield basement. Leonard survived the disease, but suffered a twisted leg. "Not a good time was had by all," recalls Liz of those days, "we had a very small house and there were nine of us stuck inside, but we made it."

Liz's cousin, Irene Randolph, experienced a mild case of polio. Their home was also quarantined.

The final case is a story of survival, humor, and courage. Liz's babyhood friend, Bev McCauley, contracted a severe case of polio. She was in an iron lung and then



When muscle control is lost, such as from polio, the fluctuating air pressure inside an "iron lung" stimulates breathing. With today's modern medicine, the iron lung is generally obsolete. However, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic revived some interest in the device.

in a body cast for months. Doctors told her that if she survived she would never dance, swim or be able to have children. Eventually, she did dance. She also swam, got married, and had three girls. Liz even

remembers Bev showing up in her body cast at the swimming pool and dangling her toes in the water.

During her illness, Bev had a pen pal in Greece named Tula. They wrote to each other often. When Tula received a grant to study at WSC (WSU), Darrell, Bev's father, drove Bev—still in her body cast—to the Spokane airport to meet Tula.

While slowly recovering at home, Bev needed to keep up with her school work. So the Lion's Club paid for the installation of microphones and speakers at her home and in her classroom, making it possible for Bev to hear and reply to the teacher.

One day, while Liz was sitting in class, the teacher called on Bev. Liz thought that



Following a mass children's vaccination campaign started in 1955 and promoted by the March of Dimes, the annual number of polio cases in the U.S. fell.

was weird, since Bev was home. Then, right above Liz' head she heard Bev's response! "I jumped a mile," said Liz. The students had not been told in advance about the recently-installed communication system!

In the United States, thankfully polio, like many other diseases, is now a thing of the past. With the help of scientific research, vaccines have been created to protect us. Yet it is our resilience and determination to solve problems that keeps us strong.

During this current pandemic, we must remember that our ancestors, amidst tears and hardship, never gave up. Accordingly, we will adapt. The sun will continue to shine and we will pull through.

Smallpox Epidemic of 1881 Strikes Columbia County — by Paula Moio

In 1875, the Washington Territorial Legislature finally granted the people's request to form a new county. Carved out of Walla Walla County, Columbia County was thus formed. It gave a portion of the territory's growing number of new settlers the legal structure they needed to form a county-level government in their area.

Stretching east to Idaho Territory, the new county encompassed the entire southeastern corner of today's Washington state, including what later became Garfield and Asotin counties.

Territorial and United States census numbers for 1879 and 1880 list Columbia County's population at 6,894 and the City of Dayton's at 996.

Then in the fall of 1881, Columbia County was hit with a smallpox epidemic.

Smallpox is caused by a virus. It's transmitted person-to-person through the air, such as by coughing, or by physical contact. Symptoms include headache, fever, and pains followed by rashes that appear as blister-like red spots on the hands, feet, and face. These often leave scars and pockmarks.

When what turned out to be cases of smallpox first appeared at the beginning of October 1881, doctors missed an early diagnosis. However, Dr. Marcel Pietrzycki, an Austrian immigrant who had recently settled in Dayton, was the first doctor to identify the disease. He was insistent that the community take action. Although initially scoffed at, his stance was later credited with saving many lives.

As the epidemic gained momentum, thirteen citizens formed a Board of Health.

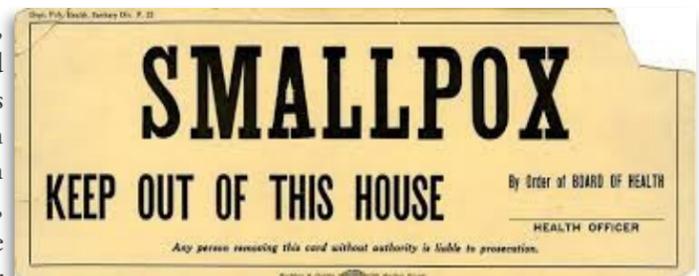
Led by Dr. Pietrzycki, the board determined Dayton to be the county's hardest hit area. A plan was formed. The town was divided into wards, and committees were assigned to oversee proper care of patients. The committees would also enforce quarantines.

Initially, the disease seemed to be under control: As of November 12, 1881, there were only three deaths. Then the epidemic began to spread. It increased rapidly in both numbers and severity of infections.

In response, effective as of 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 17, 1881, Dayton was placed into forced quarantine.

Community members quickly raised funds, purchased an acre of land, and established a "pest house" to isolate smallpox victims who were unable to quarantine at home. Quarantine terms stated that:

- *No one could come into or leave Dayton without permission of the Chief of Patrol*
- *Businesses, offices, and saloons had to close daily from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Exceptions were drug stores, hotels, livery stables, and food establishments*
- *Quarantine rules were published in the Dayton papers and displayed on posters put up throughout town*



- *To warn others to stay away, quarantined homes were instructed to fly a yellow flag*

The quarantine worked. The week it went into effect, there were a dozen new cases and six deaths. The following week, there was only a single death. The 10-day quarantine was lifted on November 27, 1881.

Final vestiges of the disease were gone by February 1882. In all, Dayton reported 100 cases of smallpox and 11 deaths. Columbia County reported 167 cases and 21 deaths. To avoid being forced to go into the "pest house," there may have been additional cases that went unreported.

Even after lifting of the quarantine, the neighboring communities of Walla Walla and Waitsburg refused to accept mail sent from Dayton. Consequently, mail delivery did not resume until January 1, 1882. Schools reopened the following day.

Sources for this section on smallpox: The State of Washington Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation, which includes information from F. A. Shaver's *An Illustrated History of Southeast Washington*; W.F. Fletcher's *Early Columbia County*; and HistoryLink.org

Epidemics and Pandemics in History

compiled by Roz Edwards

1881 — From October to December, a **smallpox** outbreak traumatized Columbia County, Washington Territory.

1889-1890 — The **Russian flu** captured about 13,000 lives in the United States.

1898 — During the Spanish American War, **yellow fever** and **typhoid** claimed more soldiers than combat.

1916-1955 — Each summer, **polio** epidemics around the U.S. caused thousands of cases of paralysis or death. By the late 1950s, polio was brought under control by the Salk (injected) and Sabin (oral) vaccines.

1918-1920 — Due to the **Spanish flu**, an estimated 6,571 people in Washington State died. By late 1920, many states experienced a second wave of the flu. In total, the Spanish flu killed nearly 675,000 Americans.

1921-1925 — **Diphtheria** took 206,000 lives (mostly children) in the United States. Until a vaccine became available in 1926, this infectious disease was the leading cause of death and illness in children.

Rather ominous, yes? On the other hand, it shows we have made it through epidemics and pandemics before. And so, as we face our current pandemic with COVID-19, take heart: *THIS TOO SHALL PASS.*

Quarantine - Continued from Page 1

Polio Epidemics — by Roz Edwards

From 1916 into the 1950s, each summer saw polio epidemics materialize across the United States. Typically, these outbreaks resulted in 20,000 cases of paralysis or death annually. Not until the creation of the Salk (injected, 1955) and the Sabin (oral, 1957) vaccines, was polio brought under control.

By 1961 only 161 cases were recorded in the United States.