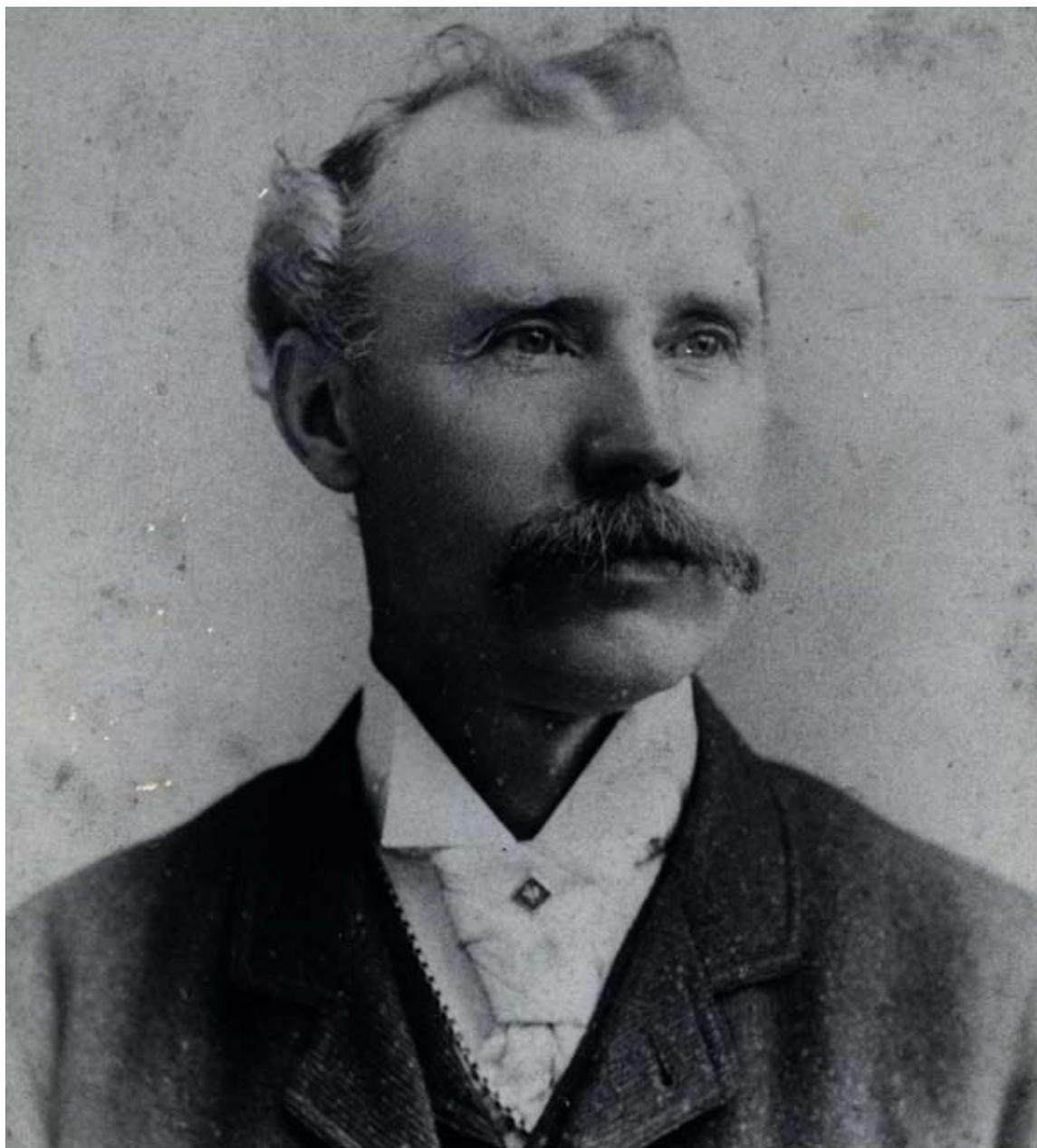


# BLACKBERRY PRESERVES

The Journal of the

## KIRKLAND HERITAGE SOCIETY



**Peter Kirk**

1840 - 1916

Centennial of his passing

Volume XXIII, Issue II

Mar/Apr 2016

[www.kirklandheritage.org](http://www.kirklandheritage.org)

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

GLENN LANDGUTH

Last time I mentioned that we would be discussing options regarding the Trueblood House at the January Board meeting. The main question at issue was whether the house would be suitable for our use as a museum. In preparation for that meeting I did a walk-through of the house with a video camera and also took snapshots that I subsequently showed at the Board meeting. The Board was impressed with the condition of the house. But in the end the Board decided that there just was not enough usable space for KHS to use the house as a museum. The owners and the City of Kirkland are seeking to find someone who could use the house for other purposes in an attempt to save it for its historic significance. Check our Facebook page for a flyer about the offer.

Our big project for February was the History Month celebration. Banners were flying from light polls and posters were everywhere.

We were successful in getting the 12 new large posters with aerial photographs, and 24 new smaller posters. The aerial views included one of Kirkland (from downtown to Juanita in the distance), the Everest neighborhood, including the railroad track (now the Cross Kirkland Corridor), and former Neal property (now the new Neal-Landguth Wetland Park), Juanita High School (with Juanita in the background), a Kingsgate neighborhood (including Kingsgate Park, Robert Frost Elementary, and I-405), the old Juanita Golf Course, and a couple of Juanita neighborhoods. New posters were also placed in the Houghton neighborhood, the Totem Lake neighborhood, and near Evergreen Hospital.

The cost of the new posters will be covered by a grant from 4Culture.

One of my next projects will be to try to enhance some of our pictures of the buildings and railroad tracks along what is now part

of the Cross Kirkland Corridor. The pictures that we have are newspaper images and as such lack the detail and quality that would have been available from original prints or negatives. The images have been requested for use as interpretive markers along the corridor. If anyone should happen to have original prints or negatives we would be very grateful to have access to them.

We are fortunate to have one Board member, Tori Dennis, who is working on her Master's Thesis toward a Museology degree, doing a thesis that may benefit KHS. The subject of her thesis is Collections Management Policy. She will be presenting her thesis to the KHS Board for possible adoption by KHS, and will also be doing a Thesis Defense at Heritage Hall. It looks like we will be learning a lot about RCWs relating to the operation of a museum. With a small volunteer staff, complying with all of the requirements could present a real challenge. Some of the RCWs may need some special interpretation for our specific situation. If necessary we may need to seek some legal opinions. If anyone is familiar with the legal implications of working with collections in a small museum environment, we could sure use some help and advice from a practical standpoint.

As a final note, I would like to note that Eric Taylor, a long-time friend of KHS at 4Culture retired March 1. Eric Taylor has been 4Culture's Heritage Program Lead Staff for almost nine years. He came to 4Culture with more than 30 years' experience. He has helped us many times as we worked with various grant programs and we will miss him. See <http://www.4culture.org/2016/02/eric-taylors-legacy-in-king-county-heritage/> for an article about his career.

We thank The City of Kirkland, 4Culture, and our wonderful members for their continuing support of KHS.

# KHS Monthly Program

7:00 p.m.

Heritage Hall

203 Market Street

❧❧ March 30, 2016 ❧❧

Jennifer Woram will tell us about her 1915 Finn Hill bungalow. It is charming.

❧❧ April 27, 2016 ❧❧

Tom Escott. Tom graduated from LWHS in 1953. His parents, Roy and Ione Escott, had history in Kirkland from the 1930's on. Roy worked for the Seattle Times. This night promises to be full of memories for you old timers.



When you attend meetings, please visit the downstairs area. Many of you have never seen our office space. It is always in transition but we try to keep it interesting.



KHS receives 100% commission from the sales of Bob Neir's *A City Comes of Age* and Steve Lamson's *The Power of a Dream*.



**facebook**  
Kirkland Heritage Society and Museum



Karen Schickling edits our Facebook account named:

**Kirkland Heritage Society and Museum.**

If you use Facebook, please give us a look and a like.



Tom Hitzroth has mastered PowerPoint. In January he treated members to the newest on an old cold case Mercer Island murder.



Newly retired Kirkland Police Lieutenant, Nick Seibert, shared Kirkland's police history in February. Kirkland can be proud.



**History Month plaques  
On Market Street**

## Peter Kirk Centennial of our Foundering Father's passing.

by Loita Hawkinson

Peter Kirk was born in England February 15, 1840 and died on Friday Harbor May 4, 1916. Peter Kirk is well known as the founder and namesake of Kirkland. But because of the failure of the Moss Bay Iron and Steel Works on Rose Hill, he has been reported to have been a failure. It is also thought that Peter Kirk abandoned Kirkland when his dream died. Neither is true. Peter Kirk was anything but a failure and he never gave up on his beloved Kirkland.



### Bankfield. The gracious home the Kirk's left in England.

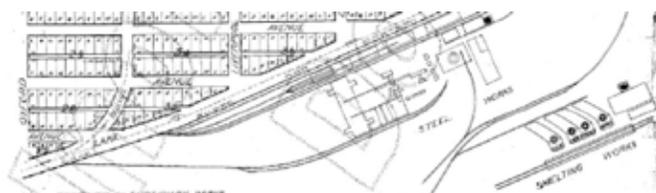
Peter Kirk came to America determined to move his English steel business to the shores of the Pacific...what we now call the Pacific Rim. He traveled across America and took careful notes of how America operated. The University of Washington archives his journals. Here you can read these small leather journals where he detailed the size of American bricks, names with addresses of friends and family and businesses, the measurements of his children, etc. Kirk visited California, Oregon and Washington and eventually selected Cle Elum for his mill town in May of 1888. This would have given Tacoma the shipping trade. Tacoma was elated.

Now enters Leigh S. J. Hunt who came to Washington determined to build a steel mill in Seattle. With lightning speed, Hunt

convinced Mr. Kirk to build his mill on the shore of Lake Washington on Nelson Bay between Houghton and Juanita. Nelson Bay was renamed Moss Bay and the 2,000 newly purchased acres were called Kirkland. In less than a month, Tacoma had lost this industry. And had Peter Kirk not met Leigh S.J. Hunt, the Pacific Northwest might very well have become the Pittsburgh of the West. There was a direct route from Cle Elum to the Pacific and the railroad was already built.

Much has been made of the quality of the ore in the Cascades as being Kirk's downfall. But KHS archives the Coal Report that states that the coke in this area was inferior and that the coal was dirty. Bessemer steel requires clean coal and quality coke. Peter Kirk only used Bessemer steel. The report recommended that the rolling mill import Bessemer ingots from England.

The Washington State plat maps show a mill with smelter in 1888 where Parkplace and the Kirkland Post office are today. In 1889, the plat maps show the rolling mill on Rose Hill. In the summer of 1888 they might not have been aware that their original platted area was a watery bog during most winters and they would need higher ground. By 1891, the mill was built and ready for operation. They were just awaiting the Lake Washington Ship Canal so that the rail produced at the mill could be shipped out to the Pacific. 1891 was an election year. Seattle had suffered a fire and no longer supported the canal. Seattle lobbied against the canal. The money appropriated for the canal was repealed by the newly elected congress and the mill failed to open. With no canal, there was no economical way to ship the rail.



Lake Street is now Central Way

To think Peter Kirk a failure because of the mill is undeserved. He continued to work and continued to invent. The English railroad is still using the tie system patented by Peter Kirk. His steel sleepers (what the British call railroad ties) are still in use in areas with termites. Both the UW and KHS house many of Kirk's original U.S. patents. And the Kirk's continued to live in Kirkland. There is confusion because the Kirk's had a summer home on Friday Harbor. The San Juan paper reported their comings and goings and always mentioned their home in Kirkland and their summer home at Mitchell Bay. All the Kirk's owned Kirkland property as confirmed by the King County tax records. It was not until the September 1904 death of Kirk daughter, Marie Kirk Bell that the steam went out of our founder and namesake. Marie, age 32, died of typhoid in Kirkland. She was buried in the Kirkland Cemetery. A century later, Kirk descendents had Marie's grave moved to the family plot in Friday Harbor.



Marie Kirk Bell's grave in Kirkland

Kirkland was platted after Pullman, Illinois which was an award winning company town built by the Pullman railroad car industrialist. Kirkland was to be a company town as well. It was platted for density and quality of life. Homes were to have three bedrooms, a bath, central gas lighting, and a carriage house with parks and services within easy walking distance.

There was one last effort to open a Kirkland Steel Mill in 1905. At this time, this writer

is not aware of why this attempt also failed. The Kirkland Land Company of which Peter Kirk was a heavy investor, sold to Burke & Farrar in 1910. Our founders knew the ship canal was under construction but age and grief had taken its toll. Burke & Farrar used the 1888 platting which provided for views and order. They simply used from 2 to 4 narrow lots to build modest affordable housing. They used the coming canal as a marketing tool.

When Mr. Kirk died in 1916, the family sold the Kirk Victorian home on Waverly to Burke & Farrar. It had been empty for several years. The home was demolished and two homes were built on Waverly using the materials. KHS has nails from this old home but nothing else. It has been reported that wood trim from the 1889 home is being used in other homes west of Market Street. If this is true, let us all hope it can be salvaged should these homes be torn down.

It has frequently been stated that the original founders had a falling out after the original mill failure. But society pages prove they continued to celebrate and visit. The late Nancy Williams Bell, youngest granddaughter of founder Walter W. Williams said she was given the princess treatment by the Kirk family. She loved them and they loved her. Nancy was our last immediate link with our founders. She died in 2013.

Kirkland owes Peter Kirk everything. Had Kirk not selected this area, Kirkland, King County, Washington would not exist. This area would not enjoy the platting that makes our area unique. And Costco would not have Kirkland as their house brand. The treads of history are amazing.

100 years ago Mr. Kirk died knowing the canal would be opened in 1916.

Family report that he was very pleased. The canal that lured him to Kirkland had been completed in his lifetime.

# KIRKLAND FOUNDER DIES

Millionaire English Steelman Passes at San Juan, Aged 77.

SEATTLE, May 9.—Peter Kirk, founder of Kirkland, a Seattle suburb on the east shore of Lake Washington, died Saturday at his home at Friday Harbor, San Juan Island, aged 77 years. Mr. Kirk was reputed to be a millionaire when he left England, where he owned a large steel mill, in 1836.

Before coming west Mr. Kirk examined the mines and steel work of Pennsylvania and was offered inducements to establish a steel mill at Pittsburgh, but determined to try the West. Mr. Kirk planned to establish a \$10,000,000 steel mill, but the panic of 1893 upset his plans.

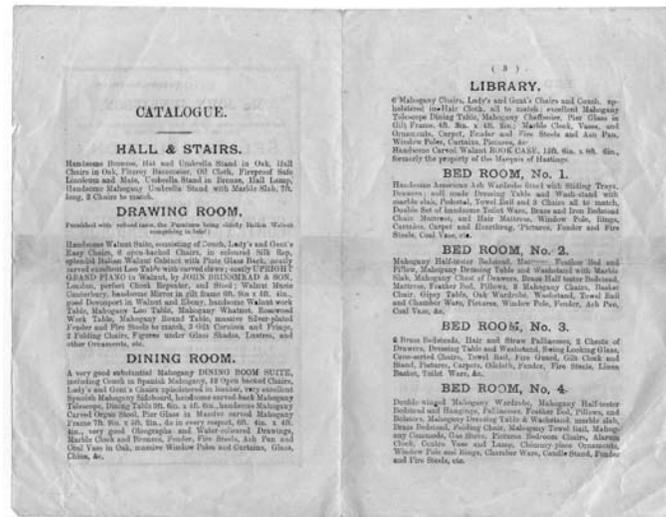
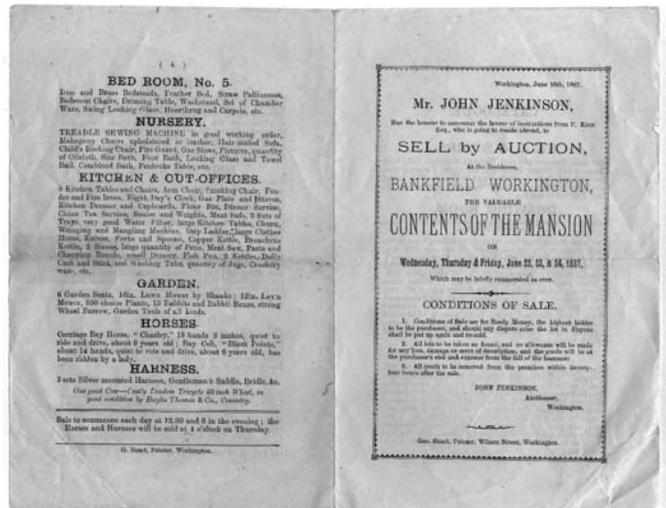
A few years ago Mr. Kirk moved to San Juan Island.

This 1916 obituary has most of it right. But our founders had paid cash so they did not lose much capital during the 1893 crash.

### Another Branch of the Northern Pacific.

One of the most important actions of President Harris during his recent visit to the coast, says the Tacoma Ledger, was the closing of the contract on behalf of the Northern Pacific company with the Moss Bay Steel and Iron Works syndicate, of which Peter Kirk is the representative. A branch railroad will be built to a new townsite in the neighborhood of Cle-Elum, where the manufacturing of iron and steel will be situated and the products be brought to Tacoma for export. When these works are completed hundreds of men will be employed by the syndicate, and it will be the means of building up that section of the territory and developing the mineral resources of the Cascade range. The Moss Bay Iron Company of England is one of the wealthiest corporations engaged in the manufacture of iron and steel in the world, and the establishment and operation of their works at the place indicated will involve the employment of the immense capital of \$2,000,000. Their works will be adjacent to the Northern Pacific railroad in the Cascade mountains, where they have already secured from the railroad company large bodies of coal and iron lands.

From the May 4, 1888 Oregonian. Newspapers across the county announced that Peter Kirk had selected Cle Elum.



Thanks to the Kirk family, KHS has an original program from the 1888 Bankfield Auction.



Peter Kirk's top hat

# Blackberry Preserves

President:	Glenn Landguth *	425 821-4172
Vice-president	Karen Schickling *	425.827-3446
Secretary:	Loita Hawkinson	425.827-1950
Treasurer:	Frank Rosin *	425 827-3446
At-Large:	Janeen Ryseff *	425 827-3446
At-Large	Tori Dennis	425 827-3446
At-Large	Nancy Bock *	425 827-3446
At-Large:	Linda Jatón *	425 827-3446
At-Large:	Vic Newhard	425 892-8388

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	Karen Schickling	425-827-3446
Controller	Hazel Russell	425-827-3446
Blackberry Preserves:	Loita Hawkinson Marjorie Denton	425 827-1950
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	Corrine Hieb	
	Margie Denton	
	Marilyn Johnson	
Feature Writers	Loita Hawkinson	425 827-1950
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	Clarence Stone	
Planning and Historic Sites:	Lynette Weber*	425 890-9058
Scholarship Committee	Jim Neir*	206 478-3173
	Kris Woods	425 827-3446

\* Chair or Co-chairs

\*\* During WWI, the Hello Girls were ladies who served as telephone operators. For KHS, these sweet ladies call and remind you of the next meeting or event.

\* Kirkland Natives or deep roots serving on the KHS Board.

Webmaster: Loita Hawkinson

## Kirkland Heritage Society

[www.kirklandheritage.org](http://www.kirklandheritage.org)

**425-827-3446**

**KHS is 100% volunteer with no paid staff.  
Your memberships make it happen.**



### 2015 MEMBERSHIP

**Kirkland Heritage Society**

**January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016**

KHS qualifies for tax exemption under 501(c) (3) and your contribution is deductible to the extent allowed by law. We qualify for matching gift contributions by those employers who offer this benefit.

### Membership Category

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Kirkland Heritage Society  
Heritage Hall, Lower Level  
203 Market Street  
Kirkland, WA 98033.



## TO RENT HERITAGE HALL

**Call Kevin Ball at Kirkland Parks**

**425 587-3398**



## Fir Grove, the Kirk family Victorian home in Kirkland

Fir Grove was built by John G. Bartsch who also built the original Central School and the Shumway mansion. The Kirk's owned this entire block with the home sitting on the NW corner of 5th Avenue W and 3rd Street W. It faced Waverly Way and Lake Washington.

The UW archives the original insurance policy giving the home's location. The Kirk's considered a water tank in the attic where they could take advantage of the summer heat.

The brochure is also at the UW. Solar power in its infancy.

**Blackberry Preserves** is produced by the **Kirkland Heritage Society**, for KHS members and those interested in Kirkland's past. **Loita Hawkinson, Editor.**  
For information on KHS - visit our website: [www.kirklandheritage.org](http://www.kirklandheritage.org),  
or call 425 827-3446 to leave a message.

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Kirkland Heritage Society

Kirkland Heritage Society, est 1977  
Heritage Hall  
203 Market Street, Lower Level  
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