



# RESTORIA

THE LOWER COLUMBIA PRESERVATION SOCIETY SEEKS TO PRESERVE  
THE HISTORY, SITES, AND CULTURE OF COMMUNITIES BORDERING THE  
COLUMBIA RIVER IN CLATSOP, PACIFIC, AND WAHKIAKUM COUNTIES

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



LCPS began 2021 by refining our goals, establishing our service area, and focusing on engaging and educating our communities. After launching our tour app and creating the 1922 Fire and 1800s self-guided tours, we turned our attention towards developing educational video content. By the end of the year, while I was on family leave, Jaime stepped in and created a series of videos exploring Astoria's historic church buildings. I was blown away by how professional and entertaining these videos are, and I urge everyone to visit our YouTube channel to see them. In 2022, we will continue to explore additional church buildings and other themes, so stay tuned for more content!

We are happy to report that many digital archives and resources have become easier to access during the past year. Check out the Astor Library Digital Archives: scrapbooks, maps, photographs, and more; the Oregon State Archive's newly available death and birth records; and easier access to Astoria's Municipal Codes on the city's website.

In this issue, we also feature an essay from Joshua Blomquist reflecting on changes to Astoria's built environment since the 1980s and 1990s. Speaking of the 1990s -- do any of you have memories of the second version of the Fort Astoria sign being installed or know what happened to the original fort sign? As we begin planning our celebratory event for the dedication of the newest Fort Astoria sign, we would love to collect personal stories from the past. Do any long-time residents remember the big parade at the 1948 dedication? Want to share your story? Please reach out to us!

*Rachel Jensen*  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

## 2021 VIRTUAL CHURCH TOURS

Back in 2015, LCPS organized a self-guided tour of four of Astoria's historic churches as an end-of-year event. With interest from both our members and the public to do another church tour for the winter holidays, we decided to go virtual for 2021.



We kicked off the program with First Presbyterian Church on 11th and Grand. This church was built in 1903 and financed by Captain George Flavel in his will upon his death. In this video, you will learn about the building's construction, the hammer truss work in the nave, and the Povey Brothers stained glass windows. We feature clips from Pastor Bill Von Nostram; City Historian, John Goodenberger; and congregation member and passionate preservationist Linda Oldenkamp who explain the history of the church and the preservation work that has been put into maintaining the historic building.

Our second tour explores the history behind Lutheranism in Astoria and the merges that led up to the formation of Zion Lutheran Church. This mid-century church was built in the heart of downtown at 12th and Exchange and designed by John Wicks and Ebba Wicks Brown. The video features many historic photos taken during different periods of construction and explores the interior of the church, including items brought over from the historic Trinity Lutheran Church.

To round out the series, highlighted the Charlene Larsen Center for the Performing Arts building which was previously home to Trinity Lutheran Church. This Depression Era John Wicks building was acquired by Clatsop Community College in the 1970s and adaptively reused into a stage and performing arts space. Preservation of this building has been maintained by the nonprofit, Partners for the PAC, for many years. We feature a sit down with Charlene Larsen, herself and Partners for the PAC Executive Director, Bereniece Jones-Centeno. We also feature music by Vincent Centeno on the building's historic Estey pipe organ.

All three tours are available for viewing on our Restoria YouTube channel along with other videos such as season one of the Restoria podcast. Stay tuned for more video programming over the next handful of months!

### WHEN HISTORICAL RECORDS TELL TWO DIFFERENT STORIES

Research for the virtual church tours involved archive digging, newspaper scanning, and personal interviews. But when one conducts research for a place and time in history, there is always more to know. History can be like an onion that way. Old newspapers are great resources, but sometimes historical events require closer examination.

In the video for Peace Lutheran Church, the 1974 merger between the Trinity and Zion Lutheran congregations was described as "unanimous" as per a Daily Astorian newspaper article found in the church archives. Further investigation found that, while the Proposed Agreement of Consolidation was voted unanimously by the church councils, to say that the congregation members all voted in favor to merge is a slight exaggeration.

From the minutes taken at the Trinity Lutheran Church Special Congregational Meeting and the Trinity & Zion Lutheran Church Council Meeting: In September of 1974, a vote took place among members of each congregation as to whether or not to consolidate the churches. There were multiple reasons for this. Each church found stagnation in membership and were aware of the realities of that as a long-term problem. From that observation, having two Lutheran churches in such close vicinity no longer felt like a necessity. Trinity, itself, was aging and costly to upkeep. It was also without a permanent pastor. Leaders of both congregations saw a merger as a way to strengthen congregational life and further the goals of the church.

Out of 91 voting members at Trinity, 79% fell in favor of consolidation. Of the 105 voting members at Zion, 80% were in favor. After the vote, with bells ringing, Zion members walked the four blocks to Trinity and were greeted with outstretched arms of joy. Together they prayed then drank coffee. It was decided that the building at 12<sup>th</sup> and Exchange, where the Zion Lutheran congregation had been meeting since 1951, would operate as the official place of worship. Peace Lutheran became the new official name for the congregation at a 52% vote. The church has since merged once again with First Lutheran Church in Uppertown, and is now known as Peace First Lutheran Church.

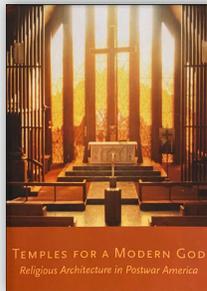
## LCPS LENDING LIBRARY

While researching our series on local religious architecture, we delved into the Mid-century movements that led to the design of the Zion Lutheran Church. Ebba and John Wicks were inspired and informed by Ebba's training at Cranbrook Academy in Michigan and her work in Pietro Belluschi's office in Portland. The following books in our collection can provide greater context for understanding modern architecture in our area.

### “Temples for a Modern God: Religious Architecture in Postwar America”

Jay M. Price, 2013

Price lays out the history of American religious architecture from revivalism that harkened back to tradition through the turn toward contemporary structures that barely read as churches in the streetscape. He explains the changes occurring within both smaller congregations and large religious organizations that led to the acceptance and adoption of Mid-century Traditional, International, and later “Modern Gothic” church styles.



### “Eliel Saarinen: Finnish-American Architect and Educator”

Albert Christ-Janer, Revised Edition with a forward by Alvar Aalto, 1979



Described by Saarinen as his definitive biography, Christ-Janer's large-format book provides a well-illustrated guide to his life and work, including time as president of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, where Ebba Wicks studied architecture. Eliel worked in tandem with his wife Loja, a textile designer – a personal/professional lifestyle that we see in the work of local architects Ebba Wicks Brown and her husband, Ernest Brown.

### “Pietro Belluschi: Modern American Architect”

Meredith L. Clausen, 1994

Clausen discusses in great detail the career of Pietro Belluschi - his arrival in Portland in 1925 and his office at A. E. Doyle and Associates, where Ebba Wicks worked during the war. Included is a fabulous chapter on his church designs, the struggle between traditional and modern, and an extensive discussion about the development of architectural regionalism in the Pacific Northwest.



## KUDOS LOOKING GOOD!



New owners of the Astoria Coffee Company Sara Moot and Pete Aiken knew they wanted ivory as the secondary color for the 1920s Rouwnes Grocery building in Uppertown. To get the perfect shade of green, they drove all around town drawing inspiration from other buildings in the area.



Peace First Early Learning Center on 12<sup>th</sup> and Franklin got a fresh coat of paint last fall to brighten up its appearance from its previous shade of sky blue. Complete with slate sash details, the creamy white is reminiscent of the house's days as the former YWCA.



The Merwyn just keeps looking better. Check out the newly installed canopy over the front entrance! This project between the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association and Innovative Housing, Inc. began in 2019 and has proven itself to be a preservation success!

## A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

### ASTORIA IN THE 80S AND 90S

*Joshua Blomquist describes sites and buildings from his experience growing up in Astoria during the 1980s and 1990s. We have added footnotes to provide additional historical information about each site.*

Growing up in Astoria was an amazing experience. When I was four years old, my mother and I moved to the sleepy city on the coast. We had spent my first four years in Central America, Panama to be exact. We relocated to Emerald Heights on the eastern edge of Astoria city limits. Emerald Heights was an old military housing development consisting of duplexes and four-plex apartment buildings. It was built sometime around WWII and was outdated by the time we had arrived.<sup>1</sup>

Although the amenities were not exactly middle class, Emerald Heights had a lot to offer to a young, adventurous boy. The buildings were close to one another, and many of the families consisted of single mothers with multiple kids. As a result, there was never a shortage of kids to play ball with and ride bikes. In addition, the woods that surrounded the place provided a multitude of sites to explore and build forts.

My grandmother was my neighbor, which was the icing on the cake. My mom always worked nights, and I was often left home by myself. Whenever I was lonely or didn't get left with any food, my grandma was just down the road. I used to go down to her house and play cards or watch tv with her. Then, we would go to town and go shopping at Hauke's market, where Safeway is now.<sup>2</sup>

When I was a little kid, Astoria was a much different place than it is today. I remember the plywood mill, where the Mill Pond development is today.<sup>3</sup> We used to stop at the Uppertown market that featured in *The Goonies* for a soda.<sup>4</sup> There was no well-maintained riverwalk and far fewer tourists. Breweries were called bars, and it seemed like there was one on every corner.

My uncle used to take us to the lake, or we would go fishing on the Columbia. I don't even think you had to have a fishing license back then. The Megler Bridge had a toll on it if you wanted to go to Washington. We kids would take our bikes to the top of the bridge and then coast down the steep hill. We would wait at the bottom and put out our thumbs until someone would stop and take us back up to the top of the bridge.<sup>5</sup>

I went to school at Astor Elementary with other children with whom I am still friends today.<sup>6</sup> When I was about twelve years old, the school was used in a movie called *Kindergarten Cop* starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. It was cool to see them filming a big-time movie at our little school. I got to meet Arnold. My friend William asked him to come to our baseball game. He declined our request.



I really miss that the fairgrounds used to be downtown, where the Aquatic Center is now.<sup>7</sup> I would go with my grandma to the fair to look at animals. We would also go to the carnival and hit the rides or play games. We would spend way too much money trying to win prizes that we didn't even want, but I always had a blast.

<sup>1</sup>Emerald Heights, which contains 300 housing units, was constructed in the 1940s for naval workers at Tongue Point Naval Station (decommissioned in 1962). It was originally named Navy Heights.

<sup>2</sup>Before the current Safeway was built, the site was occupied by Hauke's Sentry. The Hauke family owned and ran grocery stores in Astoria since 1890.

<sup>3</sup>Mill Pond Village is built on the site of the former Clatsop Mill Company which operated from 1870 to 1955 and the Astoria Plywood Mill Cooperative which operated from 1955 to 1989.

<sup>4</sup>Built around 1920, the Rouwens Grocery building has continuously served the Uppertown neighborhood as a store and deli. It has housed Astoria Coffee Company since 1997. It was used as the "Stop and Snack" store in the opening to the film *The Goonies* (1985).

<sup>5</sup>The Astoria-Megler Bridge opened in 1966 and remained a toll bridge through 1993. Prior to the bridge being built, ferries shuttled cars and passengers across the river.

<sup>6</sup>John Jacob Astor School was designed by local architect John Wicks and was dedicated in 1925. The Uppertown school building was featured in the 1990 film *Kindergarten Cop*.

<sup>7</sup>Between 1941 and 1994, the Clatsop County Fair was held at grounds at 20th Street and Marine Drive (see image). In 1994, Clatsop County moved the fair to the old John Jacob Astor Experiment Station where it has been located since.



Another major part of my childhood, at least in the summertime, was the Tapiola pool.<sup>8</sup> It was where all the girls would hang out. It was right by the baseball field. A perfect day was a baseball game followed by a trip to the pool. I only hung out in the shallow end because I couldn't swim, but the girls looked just the same from there.

In 7th grade, my mom and I moved to an apartment building on 11th and Franklin.<sup>9</sup> It was cool living in town, and Astoria Middle School wasn't too far to walk. I spent hours and hours at Peter Pan basketball park honing my skills on the hoop court.<sup>10</sup> I miss all the people I would hang out with there and the hours of fun.

I would walk downtown when my mom was gone every night. I would skateboard downtown past Safeway and Newberry's.<sup>11</sup> I would cruise by Bach n Rock and Flying Barneys to hear some burnout take his turn at an open mic.<sup>12</sup> I had a lot of freedom, and Astoria wasn't trying to hold me back.

In 8th grade, I moved in with my friend Will and his family because my mom couldn't afford me for the time. His dad worked at the school bus barn next to John Warren field, where I would later go on to be a football star and Prom King. I really miss Friday night football there.<sup>13</sup>



I started high school and, at some point, moved back in with my mother, I believe my sophomore year. I remember going to the Columbia Theater and the Liberty to watch movies.<sup>14</sup> That was one of my favorite things to do. My friends and I would also go bowling at Lower Columbia Bowl, which Chunk made famous in *The Goonies*.<sup>15</sup>

In my junior year, I got my driver's license and began exploring more of what Clatsop County offered. We would go to Seaside to check out the Cove or cruise out to Knappa to go fishing at Big Creek. I would also cruise up to the Astor Column to make out with girls before the column started to look so fancy and restored.<sup>16</sup>

When I finished high school, I couldn't wait to get out of Astoria. I spent many years away, but the yearning to move back to my historic hometown began to take hold slowly over time. I missed the water and the friendly people. I am happy I live here now as an adult, even though many of the important places of my youth have changed dramatically.

<sup>8</sup>Tapiola Park was officially named in 1939. Tapiola was the domain of the Forest God Tapio in the Finnish epic Kalevala. The swimming pool was constructed in 1941 and went out of use in 1997 (See Image). The pool was converted to a skate park in 2002.

<sup>9</sup>The Su Marie Apartments was a 10-unit apartment house built downtown in 1977 to help solve Astoria's rental shortage. In 2011, the building was updated and converted into the Marketview Townhomes, offering 5 upscale housing units.

<sup>10</sup>Often referred to as Peter Pan Park due to its proximity to Peter Pan Market on Niagara, the park, which began as a playground, expanded with tennis courts in the 1970s and then a half basketball court in 1995. In 1994 it was officially named Fred A. Lindstrom Memorial Park to honor the incumbent Parks and Recreation Director who died suddenly, at a young age.

<sup>11</sup>The current Heritage Square site was formerly a Safeway store built in 1957 (See image). That Safeway was demolished in 2005 after the new Safeway was built at 33<sup>rd</sup> street.

<sup>12</sup>Two popular sites for young people in the 1990s were Bach n Rock music shop and Flying Barney's (backroom live music venue in what was most recently the Mallalternative).

<sup>13</sup>John Warren Field, located where the new Knight Cancer Center is, was a natural grass football field used by Astoria High School from 1928 until a new artificial turf field was constructed on an old landfill near the current Recology Transfer Station on Williamsport Road. John Warren was a longtime high school football and basketball coach.

<sup>14</sup>Both the Columbian Theater (originally Riviera Theatre) and the Liberty Theatre were opened in 1925 and became multiplex movie theaters during the 1980s and 1990s. The Liberty Theatre began a huge restoration in the mid-2000s. The Riviera Theatre building was recently purchased by Astoria Brewing.

<sup>15</sup>Originally built as an automobile dealership and garage, Lower Columbia Bowl, Inc. took over this building in 1957 and created a 12-lane bowling alley, still in use today.

<sup>16</sup>The Astoria Column, built in 1926, underwent an extensive restoration in 1995. Grounds improvements were made in 2005 and new stairs added in 2008. Since then restoration has continued and dramatic lighting added.

# ASTORIA PUBLIC LIBRARY BASEMENT: A MAGICAL PLACE, A VORTEX, A DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Director of Astoria Public Library, Jimmy Pearson, describes the library basement as “a magical place containing many unique items informing us of the story of our city, county, and region.” This vast collection began upon recommendation of the late library director, Glen Buch in 1941 to hold onto documents and materials in storage as a way to preserve local history. Among the many, many treasures one would uncover, there are 130 years worth of local newspapers, a bible from 1728, decades of leather bound city and county records, in addition to personal collections of Astoria’s past historians detailing firsthand experiences of life in Astoria going as far back as the mid to late 1800s.



For any of you researching the history of your homes, be sure to add this archive to your list!

After about 75 years of stashing away all these roughly 70,500 items, the basement became what City Historian, John Goodenberger, has endearingly named “The Vortex,” and in 2017, a grant from the Oregon Heritage Commission funded an assessment and curation by Archive Consultant Rachael Woody of a compilation from the vortex selected by John, himself. Operating with a team of community volunteers and students of Clatsop Community College, they were able to box, file, and organize, then eventually digitize (thanks to the help of volunteer, Eric Williams) about 20,000 of the materials housed in the magical space. Imagine 1,200 banker’s boxes worth. Later on, more funding came in from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Oregon Cultural Trust and at the end of last October, the Astoria Public Library announced the launch of their new digital archive.

**[www.astorialibrary.org](http://www.astorialibrary.org) >> Online Services >> Astor Library Digital Archives**



A gem from the archive:  
construction of the library basement, 1966

What does this all mean for you? Access to a wide expanse of local history, a frolic back in time, a greater ability to learn from the past. When you enter the digital archive, a great place to start is clicking into the ‘Collection Features’ where you will find a set of videos created by John and Rachael welcoming you into the archive, sharing artifacts from the various collections, and answering questions sent in from the public. After that, go ahead, look around and explore. In this archive you will find Sanborn maps, tons of old photographs, scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings, a log of people interned at Hillside Cemetery, and plenty more. We could go on, but would hate to spoil all of the exciting discoveries waiting for you to find.

## ...EVEN MORE ACCESS TO RESOURCES!

The City of Astoria’s Community Development recently announced the launch of new code software on their website making it easier to use and search City Code and Development code. Familiarity with these codes can help you with planning your projects, but can also be a guide to better understand decisions made on a government level. Check out the new layout here: <https://astoria.municipalcodeonline.com/>



The Oregon State Archives recently made available more birth and death records. Death records through 1970 and birth records from 100 years ago and earlier can be found on Ancestry.com or accessed upon request (for a small fee) at [sos.oregon.gov](http://sos.oregon.gov)

# WHERE WERE YOU? SEPTEMBER 4, 1948

On September 4, 1948 at 15<sup>th</sup> and Exchange streets, a formal dedication of the park commemorating the site of John Jacob Astor's fur trading post (that later became known as Fort George) was celebrated with music, speeches, and a parade.

Did you or a family member attend this event? Do you have memories of the original 1948 sign and when it was replaced? If so, we want your stories!

Contact Jaime at [admin@lcpsociety.org](mailto:admin@lcpsociety.org)



## LCPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- KAREN PARROTT, PRESIDENT**
- KYLE WALKER, VICE PRESIDENT**
- KELLY SHUMAR, SECRETARY**
- WADE FREITAG, TREASURER**
- GLEN HERMAN**
- BRIAN PIETROWSKI**
- ASTRONEMIS RAY**
- LUCIEN SWERDLOFF**
- DOUG THOMPSON**
- RICHARD WINN**

## HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?

Restoria is always looking for stories and preservation projects to report to LCPS members and our local community. Let us know if you have something to share!



Contact us at [info@lcpsociety.org](mailto:info@lcpsociety.org)

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

REGISTER AT [WWW.LCPSOCIETY.ORG](http://WWW.LCPSOCIETY.ORG)



NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

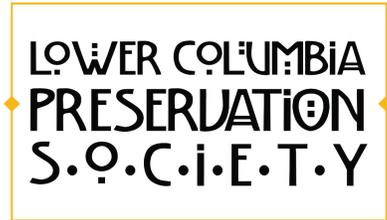
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### LEVEL OF MEMBERSHIP

- \$10 STUDENT
- \$20 INDIVIDUAL
- \$75 BUSINESS
- \$35 HOUSEHOLD
- \$100 SUPPORTER

### PAYABLE TO

LOWER COLUMBIA PRESERVATION SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 1334 ASTORIA, OR 97103



PO BOX 1334  
ASTORIA, OR 97103