



What was once the Ryan House Museum is now an empty house.

The Sumner Historical Society has not been able to open the museum for over three years. 2020 and 2021 were pandemic years. 2022 and 2023 are renovation years. The City of Sumner is making major changes to the house and grounds. 2024, hopefully, the building will open as an events venue with the museum in a smaller annex.

What is the Historical Society's plan?

We are moving towards an increased presence on the web. We now have an on-line portal featuring historical photographs with narratives. We are posting new stories to our website history book. We are posting to Facebook pages that focus on area history.

Over the last 51 years, individuals and families have brought us their their photographs, their histories and their stories. We are digitizing and documenting these treasures so we can share that history with the valley in a resource portal for area historians and families.

Docents used to greet visitors at the museum and share Sumner's story with tours and teachable, touchable moments. They are now cataloging and scanning our huge collection of family, business and agricultural histories.

Portable, top-down scanners allow us to work from home or in small temporary work spaces. Is that possible? The pandemic taught us that it is.

We are continuing to digitize Sumner's weekly newspapers, twenty percent are now on line, all searchable.

Our artifacts and historical education displays will still come out as we move through this change. We and our partners are developing portable exhibits and small permanent exhibits.

Stay tuned.

All our projects are staffed by volunteers, however there are costs for special scanners, computers, software and vendor scanning.

We have made it easy for you to support our projects.

If you want to join, there is a membership page on our website.

If you want to volunteer go to our contact page on our website.

If you want to donate, There is a page for special donations on our website.



May through June is cottonwood season and the trees along area rivers do what they have done for centuries.

Propagate the species by deploying fluffy spores that drift for miles and take root as new trees.

In 2022, when the Society needed to move our collection out of the house to free space for the renovation, a similar type of deployment evolved.

Area businesses, non profits and individuals stepped up and supported our efforts to find homes for items in our collection.

Some rehoused artifacts in displays so the public could continue to enjoy them now and in the years ahead.

One is offering our publications which are now easier to find than when they were in the Ryan House.

We have honored these supporters with a new name, the Cottonwood Continuum.

Like the cottonwood spreading its spores, these artifacts moved out into

the community with new lives as bits of area history for people to admire and learn from.

VanLeriop Garden Market has the Foster Farms horse drawn plow used for hilling raspberries.

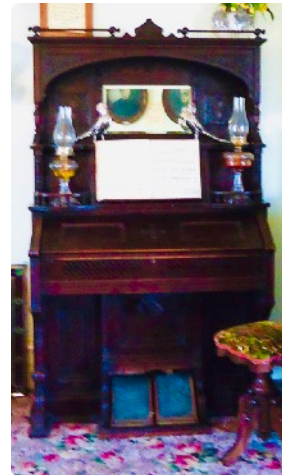
Inta Vintage has repurposed seven vintage midcentury Christmas street globes as a central focal area of their store. The globes used to be on Main Street and in the gazebo every season.

A Good Book now carries the Amy Ryan Book, the Sumner Story.

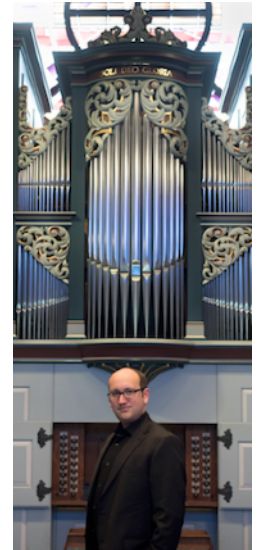
The Sumner VFW, Post 3740 has the Military Collection on display utilizing most of the museum's vintage display cases.

The Meeker Mansion now has a tapestry that once hung in the mansion and a collection of Lucy Ryan items that were the result of a sorting process by Mary Beth Ryan.

Returned to heirs
Some items and artifacts were returned to the families that had gifted them in the past.



Our parlor organ went to Cincinnati



Christopher Holman

The Kimball harmonium, which the society obtained long ago from the choir room of a Steilacoom church is now in Cincinnati.

The organ is being restored by Michael Rathke, a talented organbuilder.

It's new owner is Christopher Holman who has a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music from the University of Oxford, and is now Director of Music at St. Gertrude Church and Priory in Cincinnati.

Christopher has played instruments throughout Europe including St Paul's Cathedral and Winchester Cathedral.

Holman was visiting in the area and stopped by during one of the Society's porch sales.

In an email, Christopher shared his plan for the Kimball. " I'm aiming to produce a series of professional YouTube videos of a wide variety of repertoire, and of course I'll be more than happy to credit the Ryan House Museum and Sumner Historical Society".



Pictorials

Pictures that Support a Thousand Words

The Pictorials were a unique addition to the Sumner New Index from late 1948 to the late 1950s.

Here is why. Those papers were still being printed with traditional metal typesetting processes. The product of Linotypes and individual pieces of hand assembled metal type.

At that time, publishing a photograph was expensive, an outside firm would have to convert the photo into a printing plate. The publisher, Pete Andrews, came up with an inexpensive way to provide many photographs

Pictorial & Photo Collection

in each issue. He purchased a small offset job press and used it to print a separate two sided 10 x 13 inch "collage" of photos which were then inserted by hand into the letterpress issue. Most pictures were related to a story in the issue. He titled the insert "The Pictorial Section of the Sumner News Index."

The Historical Society was gifted an extensive file of over over 1400 envelopes containing 6000 negatives that Pete Andrews used in the Pictorials, He took most of them with a Speed Graphic press camera.

The negatives have been converted into a digital photograph and are being matched to the Pictorial and newspaper issue they appeared in. This is a long, labor intensive process.

The end result is a clean, clear photographic collection of many historical Sumner events. A wonderful way to document the history of our town and our valley.

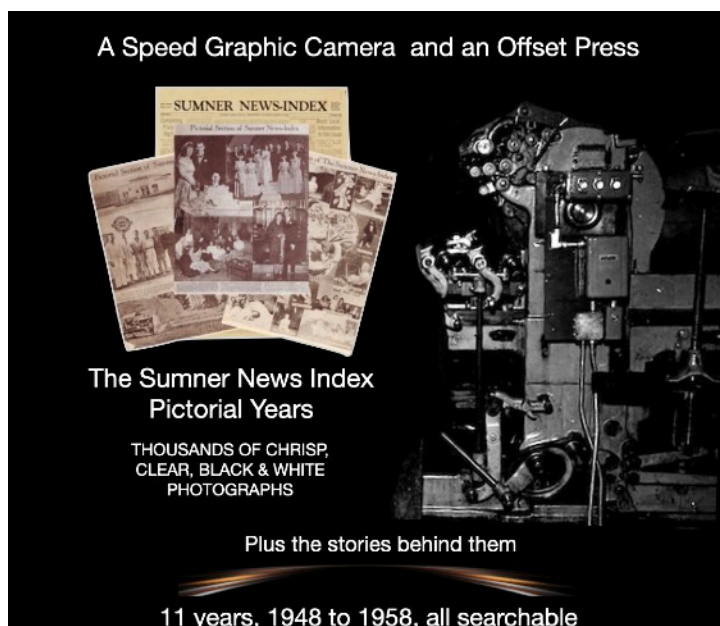
Just under 6000 negatives scanned. Over 1000 Pictorials scanned. Our thanks to Pam Prasch and Vicki Connor for the super efforts they put into the project.

In 2022, we received a grant from the Pierce County Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission which was used to put all eleven years of newspaper issues with Pictorials on our on-line newspaper platform. We were also able to create an on-line portal so we could share the Pictorial photographs and the stories behind them.

We are also sharing them through the Facebook public group page, Sumner History Group which has almost 3000 members.

Some of the historical events and photographs are published in the Sumner's History Book section of our website.

A Speed Graphic Camera and an Offset Press



The Sumner News Index
Pictorial Years

THOUSANDS OF CRISP,
CLEAR, BLACK & WHITE
PHOTOGRAPHS

Plus the stories behind them

11 years, 1948 to 1958, all searchable



Sumner's
History
Book

1936
From the Fields of
Our Valley to the
Nation's Tables

SEAL BROCK
CIRCUS

IT'S YOUR HISTORY, COME AND GET IT



Interpretive Plan

One recommendation in the 2019 ARG Ryan House study was that "the Historical Society should develop an Interpretive Plan. Such a plan serves as an essential reference that memorializes the society's mission, identity, interpretive scope and collection content."

We based the plan on our bylaws.

The objectives of the Society shall be the discovery, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history of the Sumner area.

To provide for the preservation of such material.

To bring about the preservation of historic buildings.

To disseminate historical information and arouse interest in the past by publishing historical material in the newspapers and otherwise.

To hold meetings with lectures, papers and discussions.

Find an overview of the plan on our website



Roger Stroeve



Early this year the Society lost a treasured member, Roger Stroeve. Roger filled a lot of roles, Board Member, Half of the M&M team during Street of Treats, volunteer at every event, and highly skilled with a handtruck.

He knew Sumner's history, the people, the places, the events. He always had a memory to attach to any discussion. He was kind, his kindness drew people to him. Lots of people.

During his long carrier at Pasquier Panels, Roger was the guy a new person would go to for advice, knowing that it would be warmly given, he was the guy managers would go to for advice, knowing that it would be honestly given.

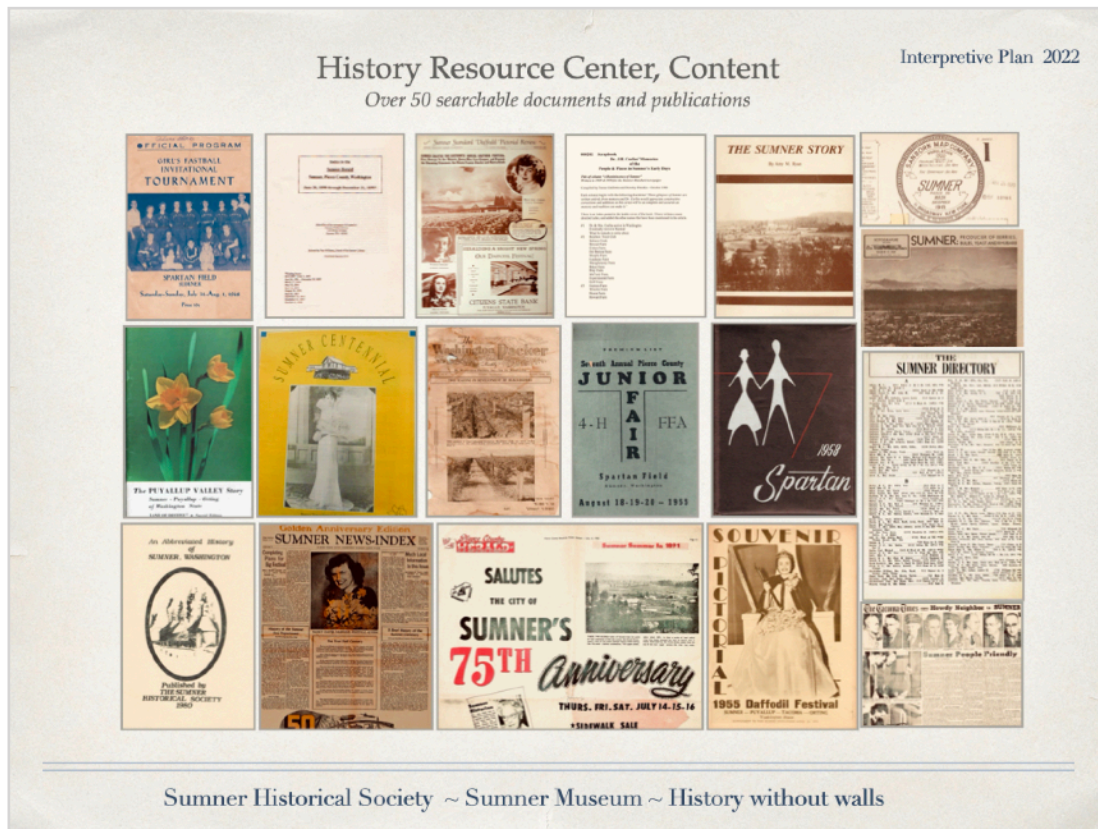
In group situations, board meetings, planning sessions, event set up, event doing, event takedown, he would listen, track the flow and then always make the right suggestion to move things along. There is a description for people that can do that, an undesignated leader.

Organizations like the Historical Society are usually all volunteers, they work hard and are satisfied with the reward of serving others. It's only natural that Roger would be drawn to a group like ours. It's only natural that he will be missed. Thank you Roger.



We are embarking on a new project. that will keep us busy in 2023 and 2024.

An on-line Resource Center that will eventually have over fifty searchable documents and publications. There will also be over thirty maps of Sumner and the area. We will also be scanning over 90 scrapbooks with individual and family histories.



General Histories
Phone Books
Digitized newspapers
Indexes, directories
Maps, platts, abstracts

Newspaper Special Editions
Business & Organization Histories
Family Histories
Photo collection

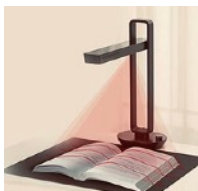
Some examples:

The Sumner history articles written by Dr. Corliss for the Sumner Standard in 1949 and 1950. There are over one hundred articles.

The special Daffodil Festival Pictorial booklets published by the Sumner News Index.

The Sumner Ski Club events, personalities and special train trips to Mount Rainer.

The Sumner Japanese American that went from Camp Harmony to Camp Minidoka to the 442nd Regiment and returned with a purple heart.



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Membership



From the 1870s, the Ryan House on Main Street has been a center of change in Sumner. History tells us the Ryans initiated changes that made Sumner a better place.

The kitchen was the first store in Sumner. The house was the first permanent city library then the first museum. George Ryan was the first Mayor. He built the first train station. A Ryan was the first to put up Christmas lights on Main street and start the tradition of decorating the holly tree on the front lawn. Sumner's Tree of Light.



Given by the heirs to the Town of Sumner
for Library Site, Jan. 25, 1926

Table Card from the 1926 announcement of the Ryan family donation



Sumner
Museum

Sumner's first museum, 1979. Sumner Historical Society

Now a new change, a major renovation that will take a couple of years to complete. This presents a major challenge to the Sumner Historical Society. Our entire collection is out of the house and in storage. When do we go back? An exact date is unknown.

What about your membership?

We hope you will continue to support us as we work through this change. However, we are offering a way for you to stay with no membership dues until we are back in the house. A hiatus plan, you will find that option on our website membership renewal page.

A change in membership structure



Newspaper Archive of

**The Sumner News Index &
The Sumner News Review**

Early this year the company that hosts our on-line newspapers changed from free access to a subscription plan. They explained that this was a matter of economic necessity. Along with our newspapers, they host papers for over 400 other museums, historical societies and small newspaper partners. Their basic cost for a subscription is \$60. a year.

We offer a voucher for a free or reduced cost subscription. Our current members receive a free subscription. New members can add a subscription for \$10. a year.

Visit our website membership page for full details.



News from Heritage Quest Research Library

We are providing a guest page to our partner in history, The Heritage Quest Research Library

Heritage Quest Research Library is a non-profit 501(C)3 genealogy library managed & staffed by volunteers. We have over 15,000 reference books & are offering Zoom classes. We help people become family historians so they can find their roots & bring their ancestors to life. We just had our 40th year in Sumner.



HAVE YOU LOST GREAT GRANDPA & GRANDMA? We can help you find them!

Genealogy at



**Heritage Quest
Research Library**



Visit us at HQRL.com or call 253-863-1806.

Or send questions to RESEARCH@HQRL.com

HELP US FIND A NEW HOME

We are all diligently searching throughout the area for buildings that would work for our 15,000 books. We need at least 2200 square feet with ceilings no lower than 9 feet and, due to the weight of the books, it must be on a concrete slab. We would love to stay in the Sumner area but may need to go further out as nothing suitable has been available in the Sumner area.

If YOU see anything that might work call Jo-Anne Huber, our Director at 253-863-1806.

UPCOMING CLASSES

September 7: DNA Presented by Judy Line ZOOM CLASS

September 21: ENGLAND Presented by Claire Brisson-Banks ZOOM CLASS

October 5: INTERNET ARCHIVE FOR FAMILY HISTORIANS
Presented by Tina Beaird ZOOM CLASS

November 17: CIVIL WAR Presented by Jean Wilcox Hibbon ZOOM CLASS

MEMBERSHIP:

Individual: \$40

Family: 45

If you would like a PAPER copy of our newsletter please add \$5 for postage and handling.

We hope you'll join us.

VISIT THE HQRL BOOTH AT THE FOLLOWING:

1

BONNEY LAKE DAYS

August 25 from 4 - 9 pm

August 26 from 11 am to 5 pm

2

BLACK LABOR DAYS

September 3 & 4
from 10 am to 4 pm

3



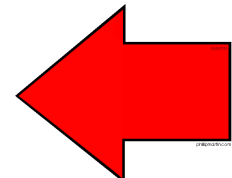
THE PUYALLUP FAIR

September 11 & 14

9 am til 9 pm in the

HOBBY HOUSE

COME & SEE US --





SUMNER HERITAGE DISTRICT



MAIN STREET, SOUTH SIDE, LOOKING EAST

● ● ● OUR MID CENTURY
HOMETOWN

SUMNER HISTORICAL SOCIETY, view our virtual tour

On our website

The Sumner Historical Society hosts a virtual tour of our Downtown Heritage District. It started with those buildings that are more than one hundred years old. More are being added in 2023.

This tour brings you the stories of the store owners who built and ran Main Street businesses over the last hundred plus years. Who they were, their families, their customers, what they sold, their civic and social involvement.

In 2024, we will add another group including the one we just lost to fire, the Gill Building, which most of us know as the Attic, Stuck Junction, Whispering Hills and other businesses.



The request we receive the most? People wanting to know the history of a home. That is natural given that many, many Sumner homes are over 100 years old.

The Society is developing a Historical Register of Sumner homes. The result will be a framework and process for researching the history of heritage homes. We will also provide information on existing tax benefits.

We are also updating existing home tour guides and we want to go beyond the architecture and add a people narrative to the homes history. Who lived there, where did they work, what was their community involvement.



What was that? Lets check it out

We like to call this little corner of the newsletter the correction corner.

When we hear or read a snippet of Sumner's history that sounds a little odd, it goes to this corner for a time out while we check it out.

We have been reading that one intersection, Wood and Main, is "the oldest intersection in Sumner". Nice sound bite but is it actually factually?

We look at the Platt of Sumner drawn on the Ryan's dining table in 1883. It shows intersections at Cherry & Main, Kincaid & Main, Alder & Main.

Wood was not on the map.

A 1894 map of the Ryan 40 acres shows that Wood dead-ended at Main and south of that spot was a dry river bed with a small stream in the wet months.

A review of the 1925 Phone Book shows 47 listings on Wood, only five of them are on South Wood, all in the first block across from the church. That is because Wood dead-ended at the Weaver Apartments.

A 1946 arial photograph shows Wood still only ran one block south of Main and dead-ended. From there was a dirt track.

So history tells us that Wood & Main was not the oldest intersection in our village.

What should we learn from this?

George Orwell knew a few things about communications. His quote:

The people will believe what the media tells them they believe.

Dora the explorer knows a few things about maps. Her quote:

"Who do we ask for help when we don't know which way to go? We ask a map!"

The Historical Society has a lot of Sumner maps, we share our maps, they help generate answers, factual answers.



Hurry Up and Wait, and Dairy Farmers

Hurry up and wait, The free dictionary tells us this expression came out of World War Two, "Rush or make haste in response to an order and then be required to wait for a long time."
What would be the connection with dairy farmers?

Here is the story.



The Hurry up part. In February of 2021, the Sumner Historical Society was given six months to empty the Ryan House. Luckily for us, in 2019, we had already started sorting our collections. We had pulled items into open areas for sorting. It was the first step and it was messy. Then covid hit and we had to stop. The mess would have to wait. Later that messy look was portrayed as the natural state of affairs in the museum. That was not fair, and that will be the subject of another article.



SHS needed to store, deaccession, sell or donate three floors and 40 years of artifacts. The volunteers were busy. The short time frame denied us the luxury of examining, documenting and re-cataloging every item before storage. We developed a rapid triage system. Paper, old photographs, ephemera and small items were photographed as they went into labeled boxes.



In the months to come the photos would tell us the box content so we could prioritize, pull boxes, and properly finish the reaccession work. It was the only way to meet the deadline and avoid complete chaos. The end result was 160 boxes filled with "work in progress".

Work teams moved large and small artifacts into rented storage. One hundred years of Sumner's weekly newspapers went with the rest. Volunteers took home over eighty scrapbooks and journals, cataloged them and a volunteer transcribed the results so we could have a searchable digitized view of the contents. Many of those will be scanned and made available in an online resource center.



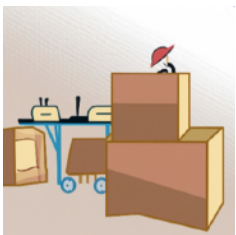
We held porch sales, made donation runs, returned artifacts to heirs, and gifted to other non-profits.

Most of this was during the hot season in a house with no air conditioning.

By late July, we were almost done. Because of the heat we asked for a two week extension. We received three weeks. Then another to August 31st.



On August 31st, we finished up and exited for the last time. We expected to be bumping up against workers crowding in, their eyes glimmering, their heads racing with thoughts of demolition and construction. Other workers would be in pickups and box trucks lining the streets, busy adjusting tool belts and recalibrating their tape measures.



None of that happened. The porch and streets were empty.

The Dairy Farmer part. We now realize we got extensions because there was nothing planned for August and nothing beyond that which would have required the house be empty.

continued on page 10



We could have had much more time in the house for examining, documenting and reaccessioning every item as they were packed away. We would not have needed the rapid triage system.

Silly us, we should have realized that bureaucrat planning is not like other planning. A major tenet for some bureaucrats is to plan for delays and then make sure the delays happen because the longer a project takes, the more taxpayer dollars go towards bureaucrats salaries.

Back in the Midwest we used to call that style of bureaucrat a ***Dairy Farmer***. They miked the public coffers for extra nourishment every day of the week. The real dairy farmers didn't like the term, however they agreed it was an appropriate analogy.

Now, we fully understand the process we are working with and we have turned it into a life lesson.

When presented with a schedule, make sure it is a real schedule, based on real needs and dependencies. We call our new life lesson,

Hurry Up and Learn.



2023 Board Elections

Our Board of Directors is composed of 16 members of the Society, Each is elected for a four year term of office. One-fourth are elected each year.

For the term beginning 2023, four board members were re-elected to their positions. Christopher Loseth, Carolyn Stroeve, Pam Prash, Amie Rang



On Friday, July 14th, at 10 am, the city was eager to collect feedback on the latest plan for the Ryan House project with an event on the front lawn. Linda Sader, Board Member, went to see what could be learned from the presentation. Amazingly, she was the only person there other than city officials.

Her report: *I made myself known in front of the Ryan House when the City arrived with the Pop-Up. I stayed until 10:40 am. No one else came during that time. When the Mayor arrived, she graciously chatted with me (there wasn't anyone else). I used that opportunity to let her use my phone to take my picture in front of the city's tent and the Ryan House so the history of the event would be available for posterity.*

It is sad that nobody else cared to be there. However the event was not publicized until one or two days before and it was planned for a weekday and a time that probably made it hard for people to be able to attend. At least the city had our support.

The Story of Rhubarb in the Sumner-Puyallup Valley

A Sumner Historical Society sister site, *Rhubarb Roots, Past & Present* covers the history of rhubarb in the world and in the Sumner - Pullalup valley.

<https://www.rhubarbroots.org>





Sumner Historical Society

Mission Statement:

The objective of the Society shall be the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the history of the Sumner area.

Officers

President: Dale Loseth
Vice President: Linda Sader
Treasurer: Carolyn Stroeve
Secretary: Dale Loseth

Board Members

Carolyn Stroeve
Linda Sader
Dale & Rita Loseth
Ed Hannus
Michelle Champlin
Sara Prasch
Chris Loseth
Pam Prasch
Amie Rang
Vicki & Mike Conner

Director Emeritus

Mary Beth Ryan
Patricia Tribby
Marcha Lindberg

Interested in joining the Sumner Historical Society?
You can find a membership form on our website.



Upcoming Events



Street of Treats

October 31st 2023

In the afternoon our docents will decorate the house and lawn in vintage Halloween fashion. Then, after 7 pm, lots of happy kids will get a treat bag with a sticker with the museum's holiday greeting.

2019 brought over 1300 people to our museum's front lawn.
97th Lighting of the Tree of Light



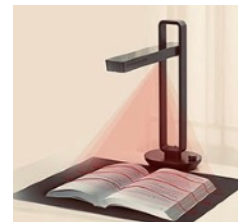
The holly tree has been radically trimmed, a plan is developing for this years tree lighting

What's in your scrapbook?

Do you have a piece of Sumner's history that you would be willing to donate or share with the Sumner Historical Society?

Examples are photographs of community events, homes, business buildings, schools, churches, street and farm scenes.

Newspapers, family histories, club and event memorabilia and other items of a printed nature.



Help us preserve Sumner's history

Sumner Historical Society,
1228 Main, Sumner, Washington 98390
contact@sumnermuseum.org

Historical Partners



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
for STATE and LOCAL HISTORY



Washington
Museum
Association



Heritage League of Pierce County





Sumner Historical Society

1228 Main Street

Sumner Washington, 98390

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