

THE PRESERVATION POST



Clark County, Washington Historic Preservation Newsletter

Walter Day Hilborn, Clark County's most notable architect

By Jacqui Kamp

Walter Day Hilborn designed some of the most familiar structures here in Clark County. Everything from civic buildings, like the Clark County Courthouse (see page 2) to the drive through Spic-N-Span building, now home to Muchas Gracias.

He designed social buildings, like the Camas American Legion Hall (see page 5); movie theaters, like the Kiggins Theater (see page 3); and banks, such as Vancouver Federal and Loan, now home to Chase Bank. He also designed private homes; office buildings; churches; hotels/motels; medical offices; and educational buildings.



Walter Day Hilborn



Spic-N-Span, 1949



Spic-N-Span (Muchas Gracias), today

Hilborn was born on February 1, 1897, on a farm in Michigan. He fought in WWI and returned home and studied at Washington State College in the Arts and Architecture School. In 1927, Hilborn moved to Vancouver, where he began a real estate business. In 1936, Hilborn received his Washington structural engineer license, and in 1937 became an architect licensed in the states of Washington and Oregon.



Vancouver Federal Savings & Loan, 1960

In the 1930s the Kiggins Theater was Hilborn's masterpiece. Then came the nationally recognized design of the Clark County Courthouse. However, the building that really showed his talent and skills as an architect was

the Vancouver First Federal Savings and Loan. Completed in 1960, Hilborn was 63 years old and nearing the end of his career.

The new bank was the pride of the city with a multi-page article in the newspaper. Vancouver's own nationally known sculptor James Lee Hansen, created the six foot tall bronze phoenix rising from the ashes in the lobby. Other details included heated sidewalks, a 145 foot deep supply well, provisions for a carillon bell system in the tower, walnut and butternut wood trim, a closed circuit TV, public meeting rooms in the basement, and a drive thru tellers window protected by bullet proof glass.



6 ft. bronze phoenix in lobby

"No single person in the history of Vancouver has had a greater impact on the physical built environment than architect Walter Day Hilborn", as stated by Washington State architectural historian, Michael Houser. Hilborn's career spans a 40-year period designing over 380 buildings in Washington and Oregon.

The many looks of Clark County's courthouses

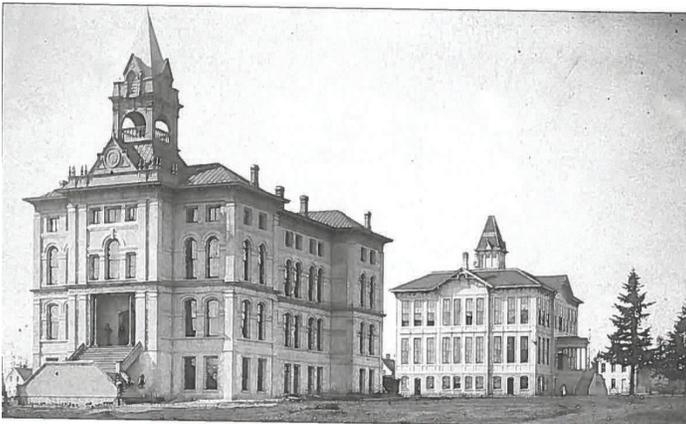
By Jacqui Kamp

Did you know that the county courthouse located at 12th and Franklin is the county's fourth courthouse? The county's first proper courthouse was a two-story frame structure built in 1855. The frame building with a cedar shingle roof stood on West Reserve Street, a street which disappeared when the Vancouver Freeway was constructed.



1st courthouse, West Reserve Street, built 1855

The second courthouse, located at Eleventh and Franklin Street was completed in 1883. This magnificent structure was larger and contained three floors and an attic. The West Shores magazine for August 1883 praised the architecture of the building, stating "in the matter of public buildings, it surpasses any town of its size on the coast".



2nd courthouse (front) at Eleventh & Franklin, built 1883

Unfortunately, it did not last long. On Feb 24, 1890, the new courthouse burned to the ground in a large fire. There were no fatalities, but many public records including those of the Superior Court dating back to 1848 were lost.

The third courthouse was located one block north of the today's building. Completed in 1892, it served the county for nearly 50 years. The big red brick building, in Rom-

anesque style had a clock tower, and was designed by the well-known Seattle architect, Willis A. Richie, who also designed five other courthouses in the state.



3rd county courthouse, built 1892

The old brick courthouse was the pride of the territory in its day. It embodied all that was known of architecture in the 1890s. However, during the 1930s, the courthouse was bulging at the seams. Clerks and equipment were crowded into every nook and cranny and the commissioners and judges were concerned with a potential fire hazard and planned for a new courthouse. This building was demolished.

For the fourth and present courthouse, Day W. Hilborn was retained as architect. The 78,062 square foot, 6 story and basement courthouse was built to withstand hurricanes, earthquakes and is almost fire proof. It was built of reinforced concrete using a new, modern method at the time, called pozolith, a process that disperses cement evenly through the concrete, which increases its strength. It took about 95,000 man hours of hard labor to build the courthouse.



4th and current county courthouse, built 1941

When the building was completed in 1941 it won a national prize for architecture. It's been compared to the Rock of Gibraltar and was designated by the Civil Defense, as the biggest fall-out shelter around. All this was built without federal or state aide, thus making the project strictly a Clark County effort.

The county will be submitting a nomination of the building to the National Register of Historic Places in the fall of 2013.

“We’ll Meet You At The Kiggins!”

Vancouver’s Kiggins Theatre

By Andrew J. Gregg, Chair, Historic Preservation Commission

J.P. Kiggins, a Nashville, Tennessee native born in 1868, left military service at Fort Vancouver in 1899 to pursue a career in the building business. Kiggins was successful in a number of enterprises, and became skillful in promoting Vancouver as a commercial hub. J.P. Kiggins was also active in bringing entertainment to the town, an interest that foreshadowed his place in Vancouver’s history. Like many civic leaders of his time, Kiggins decided to try his hand at politics following World War I.

J.P. Kiggins won Vancouver, Washington’s mayoral race in 1920. Over the next quarter-century, Kiggins made indelible marks upon Clark County not only politically, but also structurally. Of the several remaining historic buildings he sponsored in downtown Vancouver, none serves to preserve Mayor Kiggins’s place in time so well as the theatre that bears his name.

Mayor Kiggins retained the services of the noted local architect, Day Hilborn, to design a motion picture theatre to grace Vancouver’s upper Main Street. Always a proponent of self-promotion, the Mayor named the new movie house for himself, eschewing the usual, stereotypical names borne by many theatres in small cities. J.P. Kiggins was one of Vancouver’s preeminent citizens, so the theatre’s name did not seem untoward.

Day Hilborn’s architectural contributions to Vancouver include the Clark County Court House, the Clark Public Utilities Building, United Methodist Church, and many of the most gracious private homes.

In the shadow of the recently completed Medical Arts Building, next door to the stylish Vancouver Federal Savings and Loan Association, and across the street from the stately Elks Lodge Building, Hilborn planned a movie house that was distinctively different from the lavish motion picture palaces which became increasingly ordinary in the 1930’s.

Hailed in the local press as a “design masterpiece,” local artisans and tradesmen crafted the Kiggins. Civic pride in the workers’ efforts was clearly displayed. Aside from the



Current Kiggins Theater marquee

building itself, the most noteworthy feature of the Kiggins Theatre is its signature marquee. Bill Cole of Vancouver Sign Company designed and created the signage that featured a combination of neon tubing, small incandescent lamps that appeared to move in a chaser sequence, and larger spotlights used to illuminate the box office and entrance area.

Vancouver’s own Central Wood Company produced the distinctive mahogany woodwork found throughout the building. In addition to doors and moldings, there was the gracefully curving banister adorning the stairway, and a beautifully appointed stage. Even today, the millwork is, remarkably enduring and impressive.

On April 24, 1936, the Kiggins Theatre celebrated its gala opening with the forgettable Claudette Colbert feature *She Married Her Boss*. From that time to the present, the Kiggins Theatre has provided movie patrons with some of their fondest memories.

1st poor farm to be listed in the Washington Heritage Register–16th to the National Register of Historic Places

By Jacqui Kamp

The Clark County Poor Farm, now known as the 78th Street Heritage Farm has been listed in the Washington State and National Register of Historic Places. “The poor farm in Clark County is the best and most intact example of the poor farm system in the state”, said Michael Houser, architectural historian with the state’s Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. “It is the first – and most likely the only one – to be listed” in the state register.

Clark County operated a poor farm on the 99 acre historic property from as early as 1873 until 1943. The property represents the commitment to poor relief that was shouldered by counties prior to the federal government’s assumption of social welfare responsibilities.

The first poor farm building, a two-story Colonial Revival house, constructed circa 1898, is the earliest known building at the site to house poor farm residents. This building burned in a May 1923 fire.



Illustration of 1st Poor Farm building, constructed 1898

In 1926, Clark County hired the Portland architecture firm of DeYoung and Roald Architects to design a new Poor Farm facility. Prominent architects in the region, they were responsible for the designs of several buildings in Washington and Oregon, particularly in Portland, OR.

Some of their designs, such as the New Heathman Hotel in Portland, built in 1927, and the Paramount Theater built in 1927, are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Clark County Poor Farm Cemetery, used for burials starting in 1913, is the earliest resource remaining on the property associated with the Clark County Poor Farm.



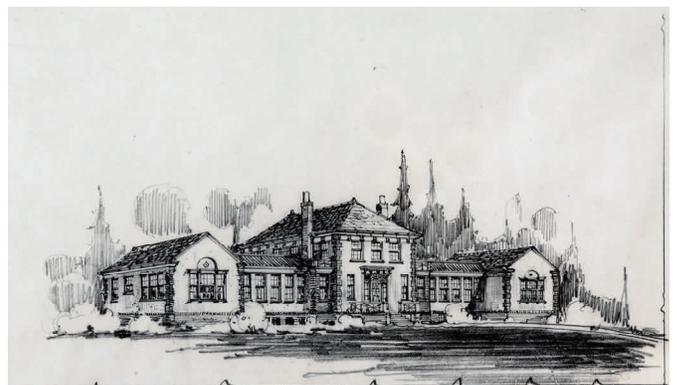
Poor Farm Administrative Building, ca 1945

Records indicate that approximately 200 burials took place in the cemetery between 1913 and 1937.

Although several poor farm residents were buried in the cemetery, many of the burials are not associated with the poor farm. Funerals and burial in the county farm cemetery were provided by Clark County for anyone whose relatives were unable to pay, up to \$35. Clark County negotiated deals with local funeral homes to provide a basic funeral service, a simple, lidded pine coffin, and transportation of the body to the cemetery. The grave markers were county-issued, metal stakes.

In addition to its significance as a poor farm, the property is also important as an experimental research station. From 1949 until 1966 the property was owned by Washington State University and operated as the Southwestern Washington Experiment Station. The historic site conveys this significant contribution to local agricultural growth and is representative of the agricultural research and education provided to local farmers in Clark County and the Southwest Washington region.

We are always looking for stories and information about those that lived and worked at the county farm. If you have any information you would like to share, please contact county historic preservation program staff at 360-397.2280 ext. 4913 or Jacqui.kamp@clark.wa.gov.



DeYoung & Roald Architectural Sketch of Administrative Building, 1926

Camas' American Legion Hall listed to the Clark County Heritage Register

By Jacqui Kamp

The American Legion was formed in Paris, France in 1919, by former members of the American Expeditionary Force, who were veterans of World War I. Focusing on service to veterans, service members and communities, the Legion evolved from a group of war-weary veterans of World War I into one of the most influential nonprofit groups in the United States. The Legion sponsored the creation of the U.S. Veteran's Administration in 1930, and was instrumental in the creation of the G.I. Bill in 1944.

Since its establishment, American Legion posts have been woven into the social fabric of their respective communities. This is especially true of smaller communities such as Camas, Washington, where American Legion posts have served a multitude of roles throughout the years, often becoming one of the most utilized and familiar gathering places in the community.

The American Legion Hall Post #27 building in Camas was designed by local architect and WWI veteran Walter Day Hillborn in 1933. Hillborn is known for designing many historic buildings in Clark County including the Clark County Courthouse, Kiggins Theater, and the Camas City Hall/Library.

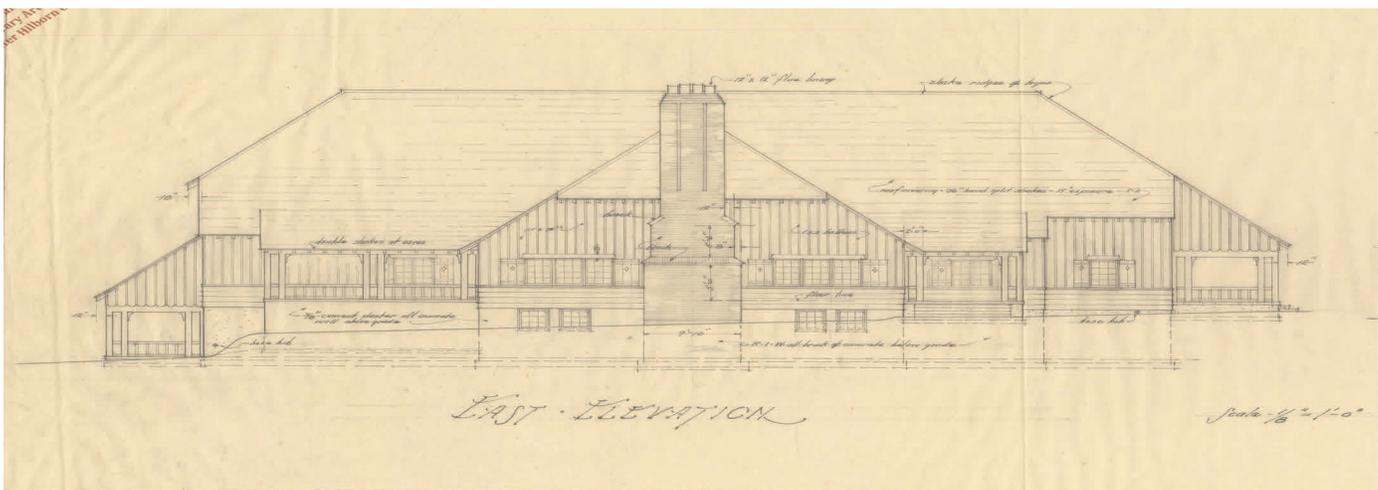


American Legion Hall Post #27, today

Many Camas residents served in foreign wars or stepped into mill jobs vacated by those serving overseas. The American Legion Hall gave those returning from war and service in the military, a place to socialize and be with others that had shared in their experiences. Although begun by veterans, for veterans, the Legion quickly became a gathering place for all members of the community.

Over the years, the building has also seen use as a roller skating rink and a neon sign company. The current owners, CID Bio-Science initiated the nomination to the local register and have overseen a major renovation to the building. CID Bio-Science, Inc. is an industry leader in the design, manufacture, and marketing of instruments for agricultural and environmental research. They create field ready, portable solutions for plant measurement and analysis.

For more information about the history of the American Legion Hall Post #27, please visit www.clark.wa.gov/planning/historic.



Walter Day Hillborn Architectural Sketch of Building, circa 1933

Places to visit, things to do

Discover Clark County's rich cultural heritage by visiting these sites of interest. For more information about hours of operation or tours, please see their web site.

Pomeroy Living History Farm

20902 NE Lucia Falls Road
Yacolt, WA

Experience 1920's farm life at the Pomeroy Living History Farm. Period dressed interpreters help visitors participate in farm activities such as grinding grain, washing clothes, feeding livestock and making rope at this farmstead registered on the National Register for Historic Properties. www.pomeroyfarm.org



Clark County Historical Museum 1511 Main Street Vancouver, WA
The history of Clark County is on display at this Vancouver museum, which is housed in a former Carnegie Library. Built in 1909, this building is on the Clark

County Heritage Register and National Register of Historic places. Museum programs include changing exhibits, "First Thursday Museum After Hours", seasonal walking tours and annual family-friendly events. www.cchmuseum.org

North Clark Historical Museum 21416 399th Street Amboy, WA

The North Clark Historical Museum shares the area's historical legacy through educational exhibits on American Indian culture, pioneer heritage & logging. The museum is in the old Amboy United Brethren Church, a beautiful church dedicated in 1910, and listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and Clark County Heritage Register. www.amboywa.com/museum.htm



Cedar Creek Grist Mill 43907 NE Grist Mill Road, Woodland, WA
The picturesque Cedar Creek Grist Mill is the only grain-grinding mill in Washington that has maintained its original structural integrity, grinds with stones, and is water-powered. Built in 1876, the mill has been fully restored as a working museum and is registered as a National Historic Site. www.cedarcreekgristmill.com

La Center Historical Museum 410 W. Fifth St., La Center, WA
Two permanent galleries were established and will be evolving through the years as families share their mementos of the areas history. www.thelacentermuseum.org

Lewisville Park, 26411 NE Lewisville Highway, Battle Ground, WA
The park represents one of the areas most lasting and significant achievements of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration. Designed by William J. Paeth, the buildings in Lewisville Park are examples of the fully evolved Northwest rustic idiom promoted by federal land management agencies during the early 20th century. The Park is studded with old-growth firs and is bisected by a pristine mountain stream.



Two Rivers Heritage Museum 1 Durgan Street Washougal, WA

Located at the confluence of the Columbia River and Washougal River, this historical museum features the heritage of the Camas and Washougal area. Extensive land records and local family histories including DLC and homesteading information, area maps, genealogy, and old home histories. Located across the street from the Pendleton Woolen Mills, a visit can be combined with a mill tour and shopping trip to the company store. 2rhm.com

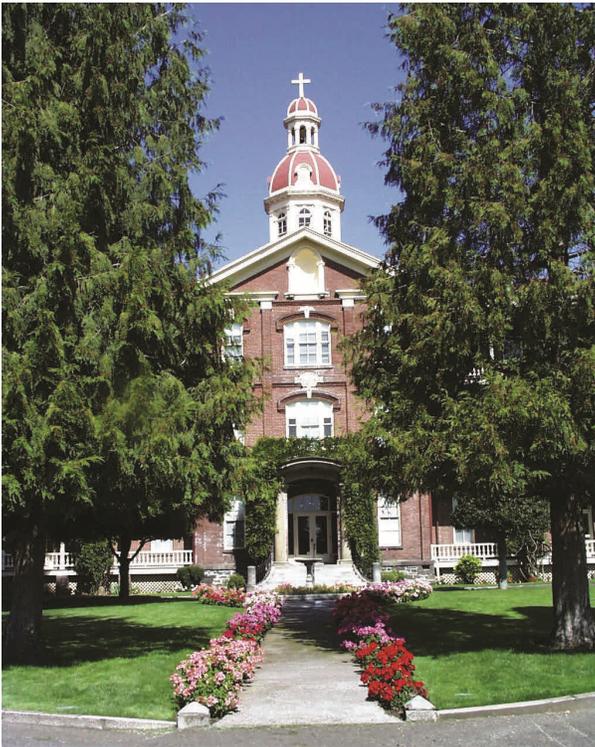


Parker's Landing Historical Park 24 S. A Street, Washougal, WA
Located adjacent to the Marina Park, Parker's Landing Historical Park commemorates David C. Parker, on whose Donation Land Claim this site is located. portcw.com/index.php/recreation/parkers_landing/

Fort Vancouver National Trust to Acquire Academy

By Steve Kaiser

The historic Academy Building, one of the most well known and loved landmarks in Vancouver, is being purchased by the Fort Vancouver National Trust. The Trust has referred to the Academy as “perhaps the most significant historic building in the region”, and has begun a capital campaign with the goal of purchasing the landmark for \$10.6 million. Currently the Trust has completed due diligence efforts including environmental and seismic analyses. In addition to the purchase price, the campaign hopes to raise \$5 million in funds to complete necessary renovation and preservation projects on the historic site.



The Academy Building (front), today

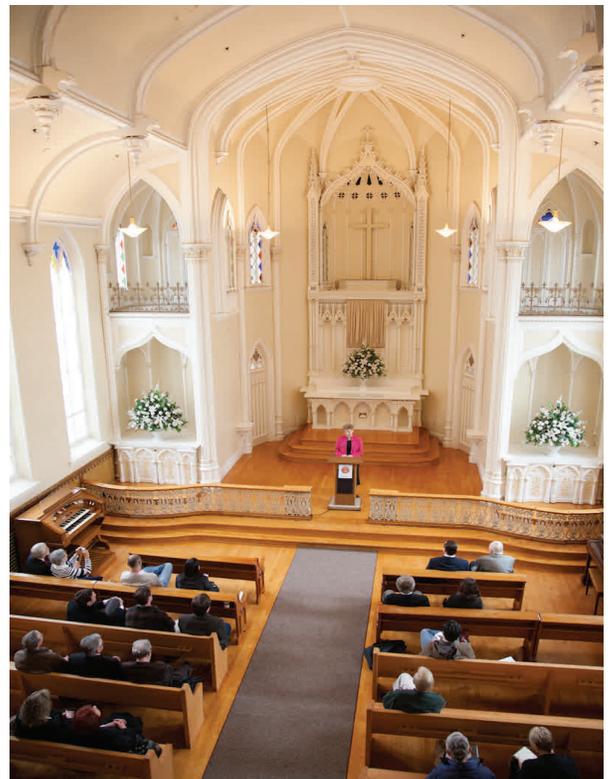
The colonial style brick building was the tallest west of the Mississippi River after its construction in 1863. The iconic structure has many outstanding historical elements, from the richly detailed facade and bell tower, to the open ballroom and chapel inside. Also notable on the site is a large brick smokestack and gardens. Planned improvements include a new roof, accessibility improvements, and elevator. Mechanical, electrical and plumbing upgrades are also planned. Preservation will also be a focus of the project, including work on the prominent covered porches. The site also has existing power and laundry buildings

that are on the historic register, and that may one day be developed to include public uses.

Once the necessary funds have been raised, the Trust will acquire the downtown building from brothers Monte, Bill and Oliver Hidden. The Hidden family were only the second owners of the property when it was purchased in 1969 by Robert Hidden and his sons. Reportedly, Lowell Hidden, an ancestor, had provided bricks and other building materials when the landmark was originally constructed in the early 1870s.

The first owner of the Academy was the Sisters of Providence. The notable historical figure associated with the Academy was Mother Joseph. She and her nuns established a network of schools, hospitals, orphanages and other social-welfare operations. Mother Joseph took a hand on approach when it came to the building, even carving several of the pews in the chapel herself.

That chapel is one of the focal points for visitors, and currently serves as a wedding event venue, but primarily the Academy has been used as an office building since being acquired by the Hiddens. Under the ownership of the Trust these functions will be continued and new development and uses will also be explored in hopes of making the historic structure even more available for the public to use and enjoy.



The Academy's Chapel, today

Historic property owners eligible for tax benefits

By Jacqui Kamp

Is your house or building fifty years or older? Does it have distinctive architectural characteristics? Did someone significant to the history of the area live, work or is somehow associated with the building or site? If so, it could be listed to the Clark County Heritage Register, thereby making the property eligible for a couple tax benefit programs.

Clark County believes good land stewardship should be rewarded, including the preservation of our cultural and historic assets. Through its *Current Use* tax reduction and *Special Valuation* program, Clark County has rewarded citizens' commitments to a healthy community and sustainable development.

These benefits reward property owners who dedicate their property to Historic Preservation by listing them on the Clark County Heritage Register.

The *Current Use* program rewards historic property owners by lowering the tax assessment for the underlying land. The *Special Valuation* program benefits property owners who make substantial improvements to historic buildings. The Special Valuation is a value, which is calculated by subtracting qualified rehabilitation costs from the total assessed value of the property for a ten year period.

For more information about nominating your property to the local register and about these two tax incentive programs, please contact the Historic Preservation program at (360) 397-2280 or visit the web site at www.clark.wa.gov/planning/historic

Clark County Historic Preservation Program

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Visit us at: www.clark.wa.gov/planning/historic

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