

For Immediate Release

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CLARK COUNTY
HISTORICAL MUSEUM



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CCHM Speaker Series Presents

Liberty Factory: A Look at the Kaiser Shipyards

Vancouver, WA – The Clark County Historical Museum (CCHM) welcomes author and maritime journalist, Peter Marsh, to the Speaker Series program with his presentation, "Liberty Factory: A Look at the Kaiser Shipyards," on Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 7:00 pm. This presentation will occur at the Clark County Historical Museum (1511 Main Street, Vancouver, WA 98660.) In this talk, Peter Marsh will describe the amazing history of Henry Kaiser's WWII Oregon shipyards and their impact on the ports and populations of the lower Columbia River from 1940 to 1945.

Peter Marsh was born and raised in Greenwich in SE London--the home of 0 degrees longitude and GMT. He has lived in the USA for over 50 years and began building and sailing a 20' micro cruiser in Portland in 1981. After sailing from Olympia to Glacier Bay and back twice in 1982 and 1988, he began reporting about yachts and commercial craft on the lower Columbia River for the Freshwater News boating paper. In the 1990s, he became acquainted with Larry Barber, the last marine editor of the Oregonian, who continued writing about the local boating scene after he retired.

Barber had been the leading reporter covering WWII ship building in Portland, especially the achievements of Henry Kaiser's three emergency shipyards. He reprised some of these stories for the boating paper, most notably the exploits of the Kaiser yard in St. Johns in North Portland that launched 334 Liberty ships in four years. He called the story "Liberty Ship Capital of the World," and continued to recall the incredible exploits of Kaiser's two Portland yards and the Vancouver yard, "the Escort Carrier Champions," until he died in 1996.

Larry's widow gave Peter her husband's archives but it was another 20 years before he finally began to seriously study them with the goal of producing a book to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the war in 2020. This is the first book to review the region's forgotten history of wartime shipbuilding, which employed over 180,000 people—30,000 of them women who were trained in a few weeks to become welders, machinists, electricians etc.

"Liberty Factory: A Look at the Kaiser Shipyards" is part of the CCHM's ongoing Speaker Series, which features talks by local historians, authors, and experts on a variety of topics related to Clark County history.

The CCHM Speaker Series is presented by the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission. This month's presentation is sponsored by the Building Industry Association. Admission to the presentation is \$5 for the general public and free for CCHM members, veterans, and active-duty military personnel.

For more information about the Clark County Historical Museum or the Speaker Series, please contact us at outreach@cchmuseum.org, visit the museum's website at cchmuseum.org, or call 360-993-5679.

About Clark County Historical Society and Museum

The Clark County Historical Society and Museum is committed to responsible collections stewardship, innovative collaboration and inspiring exhibitions and programs that engage the community in an exploration of Clark County's past, present and future. Our purpose is to share an understanding of the past that will help to build a better future for generations to come.

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