



HARBOR HISTORY MUSEUM

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MEDIA RELEASE
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HARBOR HISTORY MUSEUM TO LAUNCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Campaign to Complete the *Shenandoah*, Enclose Gallery, and Create Exhibits & Programs



Gig Harbor, WA – The launch of the FV *Shenandoah* at Skansie Shipyard on Friday, April 3, 1925 was big news. It is with the same enthusiasm and excitement that Harbor History Museum announces the launch of Project 224606, the capital campaign to complete the Museum’s Maritime Gallery. Derived from the *Shenandoah*’s vessel documentation number, Project 224606’s aim is to raise \$2,000,000 to enclose the gallery, complete the *Shenandoah*, and create engaging new exhibits; just in time for *Shenandoah*’s 100th birthday in 2025.

We have lived, breathed, and eaten from Puget Sound waters. Completion of the Maritime Gallery—through its enclosure and creation of engaging exhibits and interpretive experiences—will provide intriguing lenses through which we can see our past, explore our present, and imagine our future, while at the same time fulfilling and improving upon the original vision for the space.

The Museum’s capital campaign has three primary goals: Completion of the *Shenandoah*; Enclosure of the Maritime Gallery; and Creation of Engaging Exhibits and Programs.

Completion of the *Shenandoah*

Using an innovative half-restoration, half-conservation approach, the 65-foot wooden purse seiner *Shenandoah* will become a storyteller of great renown. From “tree to sea,” her stories will echo through the generations. The exhibit plan for the *Shenandoah* will increase its teaching ability and accessibility ten-fold. This approach will not only demonstrate restoration and conservation techniques, it will allow visitors to peer inside the hull of the boat as well as step aboard at deck level. The Museum has made a significant investment in the restoration of the *Shenandoah*—with more state grant and matching funds secured for the years ahead. Yet all the work that has been done to date is being compromised by the wind and weather that blows into the current open enclosure. Hence the need for enclosing the gallery.

With an innovative treatment plan in place, the *Shenandoah* will feature a full restoration on the starboard side and careful conservation on the port side. This approach will highlight various boat building and restoration techniques as well as allow for engaging interpretation of the commercial fishing industry and the stories of the men and women who have made it their livelihood.

Enclosure of the Maritime Gallery

Enclosure of the Maritime Gallery will upgrade the safety, security, and accessibility of the Gallery while protecting the artifacts and exhibits from weather and vandalism. Protecting the *Shenandoah*, Thunderbird Hull #1, and other small craft is paramount to their long-term preservation. Capitalizing on the connection between boats and the Harbor, the gallery enclosure will allow for varied year-round use. With the opening of Donkey Creek, establishment of a conservation easement, and the installation of a walking trail behind the Museum, what was once a secure area has become wide open to the public. While it's wonderful to share the project with passersby, our fencing is insufficient and our artifacts are at risk.

Creation of Engaging Exhibits & Programs in a Multi-Use Space

The Museum has adopted an innovative exhibit strategy that will set the stage for multi-sensory engagement and broad spectrum access. Featuring life, history, and boats in perspectives “below, at, and above the waterline,” professionally designed exhibits will connect Gig Harbor to the world. The Museum will be able to increase the learning opportunities within the Gallery and better serve the public through enhanced exhibits, collections, and program & event space. For example, “Below the waterline” exhibits will offer a peek inside the hull to see how the *Shenandoah* was built, how the engine worked, and where the crew lived. “At the waterline” will allow visitors the opportunity to discover life aboard a salmon seiner, from work deck to galley to pilot house.

Preserving our history and culture while educating our community and the many visitors about it is our core purpose. This project will allow us to expand our exhibit areas by nearly 3,000 square feet, resulting in expanded service to schools, out-of-town visitors, and our local residents. Installation of new, multi-level decking on the interior and an exterior balcony, will increase useable space for programs and events by nearly 750 square feet.

With a specially designed Preservation Workshop included in the gallery design, treatment work can continue on key elements of our preservation projects—in full, yet secured view, for visitors to see and learn from.

***Shenandoah*: The Back Story**

Pasco Dorotich had the *Shenandoah* built by Skansie Shipyard for service as a cannery tender. Little did Dorotich know that the boat would wind up having three lives: One as a cannery tender, one as a purse seiner, and its last as a museum artifact destined to teach about the lives and livelihoods of those who built and skippered her.

The *Shenandoah* is one of only two Skansie-built seiners left in Gig Harbor; one of a handful still in existence; and the only Skansie-built fish boat that is open to all.

Join the Crew and Help Make History Happen

Primary donor naming opportunities are available for named spaces in the Maritime Gallery. For more information on Project 224606 or to make a donation, please contact Stephanie Lile, Harbor History Museum Executive Director, at 253.858.6722 x3 or director@harborhistorymuseum.org.

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Image credits:

Project 224606 Logo by Harbor History Museum

Maritime Gallery Concept Drawing by Harbor History Museum

Shenandoah Moving Day [to Harbor History Museum] FEB 2003 from Harbor History Museum Collection

FV Shenandoah from Harbor History Museum Collection

About Harbor History Museum: Harbor History Museum creates opportunities to experience the heritage of the greater Gig Harbor communities by collecting, preserving, and sharing the rich history of the area. Our vision is to be the cornerstone that provides a gathering place and a sense of identity for our community. Founded in 1964, the Gig Harbor Peninsula Historical Society dba Harbor History Museum opened its new facility in 2010. The museum campus includes an 1893 fully restored one-room school house; a 65-foot fishing vessel currently under restoration; 7,000 square feet of exhibition space; and a 900-square foot library, research and meeting room. The Museum provides a variety of public education programs. Our core educational program is the Pioneer School Experience (PSE), which serves over 1,400 students every year. Led by a trained “School Marm,” the children experience a pioneer school classroom complete with lessons, recitations, music, recess, and lunch. Our permanent exhibit features professionally designed exhibitions, larger-than-life experiences, and opportunities for hands-on exploration of our region’s rich history and unique heritage. Artifacts, video kiosks, hands-on exhibits, computer interactives, and a small theater bring Peninsula history to life in our permanent galleries. In addition, the Museum provides 3-5 special exhibits throughout the year so there is always something new to see and experience for our members and visitors.

WINTER HOURS (*November – March*) – Wednesdays–Fridays 10 am–5 pm, Saturdays 10 am–4 pm.

SUMMER HOURS (*April – October*) – Tuesdays–Saturdays 10 am–5 pm, Sundays 1–5 pm.

ADMISSION – Complimentary Admission for all visitors courtesy of the City of Gig Harbor.

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