

# 2018-2019 Cultural Funding Proposal: Bainbridge Island Historical Museum: Yama Exhibit

## About Our Request

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### 1) Proposal Description and Purpose

In 1863, Captain William Renton selected the sheltered, deep-water harbor at Port Blakely as the site for his sawmill. Fueled by the explosive building boom in the west and aided by the construction of the adjacent Hall Brothers' Shipyard, the growth of the mill was rapid. Through the late 1800's the mill flourished and became, for a time, the largest in the world. Competition from other companies with better access to railways, coupled with a gradual reduction of demand for lumber, led to the closure of the mill in 1922.

During the early years of mill operation, labor was sourced from the Suquamish tribe, Canada, Scandinavia, Portugal, China and elsewhere. Growing resentment against Chinese, and the passage of Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, left the mill needing a new source of cheap labor. Meanwhile, the Japanese Emperor, seeking to modernize his country, had recently overturned a centuries-long ban on emigration. Encouraged by stories of boom towns in the Pacific Northwest, young Japanese men came to the Puget Sound region, looking to make their fortunes. The first Japanese arrived at Port Blakely in 1883 and were housed in barracks-style accommodations on a tract of land called *Nagaya*. In 1890, the Kono family arrived in Port Blakely and built a home south of Nagaya, in the place which came to be called *Yama* (the Japanese word for 'mountain', describing the steepness of the local terrain). The Konos expanded their home into a hotel and restaurant. The Takayoshi brothers, arriving in Yama soon after the Konos, built a store, ice cream parlor, and teahouse. One of the brothers, Tamegoro, opened a photographic studio, and it is largely through his work that we have a photographic record of Yama. In time, Yama and Nagaya grew to a population of 200-300, and contained at least 50 dwellings. A community center was built, which served as both a school and occasional Buddhist temple. After a brief boom during WWI, the decline of the sawmill's fortunes saw the gradual abandonment of Yama, as residents moved away, either to start farms elsewhere on the island, or to seek work in other communities. By 1929, the last residents had left and what remained of the village began to succumb to the surrounding forest.

Archaeological inspection of the site in 1992 revealed it to be largely undisturbed, making it the only Japanese settlement in the State to have escaped 20<sup>th</sup> century development. In 2012 and 2013, our curator, Rick Chandler, further evaluated the site and recommended a formal archaeological investigation, given that Yama offers a unique view of life in a late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese immigrant community. Thus, the Yama Project came into being, with the creation of an Archaeological Field School under the direction of members of the Olympic College Department of Anthropology, and with the cooperation of BIHM. Faculty, staff, and students have mapped the site and conducted historical, ethnographic, materials science and archaeological research in a series of Field Sessions conducted in the summers of 2015-2017 and during the corresponding off-seasons. A formal request for Yama to be included in the National Register of Historic Places has been submitted to the State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP).

The wealth of physical artifacts, cultural, anthropological and archaeological data from these studies, together with materials already in our collection, will form the basis for a new Yama Exhibit ('the exhibit') to be installed in the Helen Bucey Gallery at BIHM. Our intention is to open the exhibit in late spring/summer of 2018. We are closely monitoring the progress of the application to DAHP and will coordinate the timing of our exhibit to maximize the impact of any decisions regarding the inclusion of Yama on the Registry of Historic Places.

The exhibit will feature:

- A collection of small artefacts presented in new wall-mounted cabinets;
- Floor-mounted displays of objects from Yama;
- An interactive 3D scale model of the Yama village core;
- Audio visual presentations of archaeological field school activities;
- Extensive displays of photographs, maps and drawings, with interpretive signage; and
- Rubbings of gravestones of Yama residents who were buried at Port Blakely Cemetery.

To support the exhibit, we will:

- Prepare printed publicity materials for distribution in Winslow and Seattle and create signs for display at the Ferry Terminal, on Winslow Way and other locations around Bainbridge Island;
- Hold an exhibit launch event open to BIHM members and other members of the public;
- Place exhibit-related features on our website and social media;
- Submit stories about the exhibit and the background story of Yama to local news media.

Following our usual practice for temporary exhibits, it will be designed so that key elements can be presented in a portable format. The portable exhibit will be available to libraries, schools and universities, and other museums, extending the life of the exhibit beyond the period of its display at BIHM.

## 2) Evaluation

a) **Provide an estimate of the number of Bainbridge Islanders (and others) that this project will serve.**

We serve 3500-4000 Bainbridge Islanders each year. We expect around 14,000 total visitors annually, of which 40% will come from states other than Washington and 7% from overseas.

b) **Briefly describe how your organization evaluates the effectiveness of its programming.**

- We engage in an institutional retreat every year to evaluate and plan aspects of our activities;
- Museum operations are measured against national standards as part of the STEPS program;
- We have established a set of staff/board committees which meet on a monthly schedule to monitor progress towards institutional goals.

c) **How do you plan to monitor the progress of your project during the two-year funding period of 2018-2019?**

- We collect detailed data on visitation numbers and demographics;
- We monitor all group visits and educational programs for the number of participants and solicit feedback;
- We monitor traffic and comments on our social media Website and visitor book.

d) **Briefly describe the anticipated impact on organizational capacity and any other improvements as a result of receiving City funding.**

We recently offered trips to the Yama site to our members and volunteers, and to the general public. These events have proven so popular that we've had to add additional dates to satisfy the demand. When we've hosted talks by members of the Yama Project, we've had capacity audiences. All of this leads us to think our exhibit will be a popular one and will lead to increased numbers of visitors. This should have a positive impact on revenue and memberships.

e) **How will you incorporate what you learn from this project into your work?**

We will use all of the feedback we receive from our various audiences to aid in the design and implementation of future projects.

## 2018-2019 Cultural Funding Project Budget and Budget Narrative

### BIHM Yama Exhibit

Expense Category	2018-Year 1			2019-Year 2			Total Project Budget (Year 1 + 2)
	Total Project Budget (Year 1)	COBI Cultural Funding Request (Year 1)	% of Total Project Budget (Year 1)	Total Project Budget (Year 2)	COBI Cultural Funding Request (Year 2)	% of Total Project Budget (Year 2)	
<b>Human Resources</b>	\$3,500	0	0				\$3,500
Curator Salary + Benefits							
Research/Editing	\$600	0	0				\$600
Facilities	\$6,100	\$2,600	43%				\$6,100
Materials	\$2,300	\$2,300	100%	\$800	0	0%	\$3,100
Administrative Costs	\$300	\$300	100%				\$300
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$12,800</b>	<b>\$5,200</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>\$800</b>		<b>0%</b>	<b>\$13,600</b>

- 1) Total Estimated Budget for Project: \$13,600
- 2) Income generated:
  - Nominal loan fee for traveling exhibit (year 2 and beyond)
  - A portion of general BIHM admission fees
- 3) Use of requested funds:
  - Facilities
    - Build compact wall-mounted artifact cabinets \$600
    - Build floor-mounted object displays \$500
    - Create Interactive 3D model of Yama \$1,500
  - Materials
    - Printing and mounting of photos & text blocks \$1,800
    - Video Clips from Olympic college \$500
  - Administrative
    - Promotion/advertising \$300
- 4) Origin and amount of any funding committed to the program
  - A portion of the profits from the sale of Yama whiskey, a product of Bainbridge Organic Distillers, is being donated to BIHM to *“support ongoing efforts to document and preserve the unique Japanese and American history and heritage of the Yama village site for future generations”*

## 2018-2019 CULTURAL FUNDING METRICS

### BAINBRIDGE ISLAND HISTORICAL MUSEUM (YAMA EXHIBIT)

1. # OF MUSEUM VISITOR NUMBERS
2. # OF GROUP VISITS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TOGETHER WITH THE  
# OF PARTICIPANTS IN THOSE VISITS AND PROGRAMS