

Massachusetts Marks Key Point in Lady Washington History

Local News

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ABERDEEN, Wash. - The Grays Harbor Historical Seaport Authority, which owns and operates the brig Lady Washington, the Official Ship of the State of Washington, is pleased to acknowledge the proclamation of October 1, 2012 as "Columbia and Washington Day" by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick. Two hundred twenty-five year ago today, the ships Columbia Rediviva and the original Lady Washington left Boston on an epic journey of trade and discovery that encouraged the development of the future Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. In addition, the voyage led to the first circumnavigation of the earth by a U.S.-flagged vessel, and the first contact by Americans with the Japanese people. Gov. Patrick issued the proclamation at the urging of author Scott Ridley and a historical society in Wareham, Mass., home of Capt. John Kendrick, who commanded Columbia Rediviva during the voyage. Ridley has written a book about the expedition, *Morning of Fire: John Kendrick's Daring American Odyssey in the Pacific*. Accompanying Kendrick was Capt. Robert Gray, in command of Lady Washington.

In a later voyage, Gray would name the Columbia River after Columbia Rediviva and discover a bay now known as Grays Harbor. Kendrick would go on to visit Hawaii, Hong Kong, and make landfall in Japan in 1791 in Lady Washington. Although Kendrick failed to open trade with Japan due to its policy of restricted contact with foreigners, the stop paved the way for future economic and political relations that officially began in the 1850s. "We're pleased that our friends in Massachusetts understand the importance of Gray and Kendrick's voyages," said GHSA executive director Les Bolton. "We plan to mark important points in the voyages, such as the 225th anniversary of the original Lady Washington's landfall at Tillamook Bay, Oregon in May of 1788." The modern Lady Washington was launched in 1989 as part of the Washington State centennial celebrations. She currently visits more than 50 ports a year delivering living history education programs to K-12 students. She also participates in historical reenactments, festivals, and healing ceremonies with First Nations tribal members in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia. Lady Washington is currently in transit to British Columbia on a private charter.