Research by UW History Students Helps Shape Exhibit on Seattle's Historic Wooden Fishing Boats

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A new exhibit at the Center for Wooden Boats in Seattle's South Lake Union neighborhood, features research conducted by UW History students. Undergraduate history majors Letha Penhale and Victor Aque and history PhD student Ross Coen all contributed to the exhibit “Highliners: Boats of the Century,” which tells the history of Seattle's century-old fleet of wooden fishing boats. Their research, conducted under the guidance of Department of History Professor Bruce Hevly, who specialized in the history of science and technology, "explored technological changes that have kept the old boats viable, the social history of those who built and operated the vessels and how the fleet and related activities helped shape Northwest coastal communities" (Seattle Times). Some ships featured in the exhibit were built as long ago as 1913 and continue to participate in the Alaskan fishing season to this day. Thus the work of these history students not only explains the role of these fishing boats in Seattle history, but helps exhibit visitors learn how fishing continues to play a part in Seattle's present.

The undergraduate researchers earned credit for their work under the internship option (HIST 495), by which students do work in cooperation with organizations off campus.

The exhibit, which credits the Department of History as a sponsor due to our students' research contributions, opened on Saturday, February 15, 2014 and will be on display until next autumn.

Click on the link to find out more about this exhibit and about Seattle's maritime history.