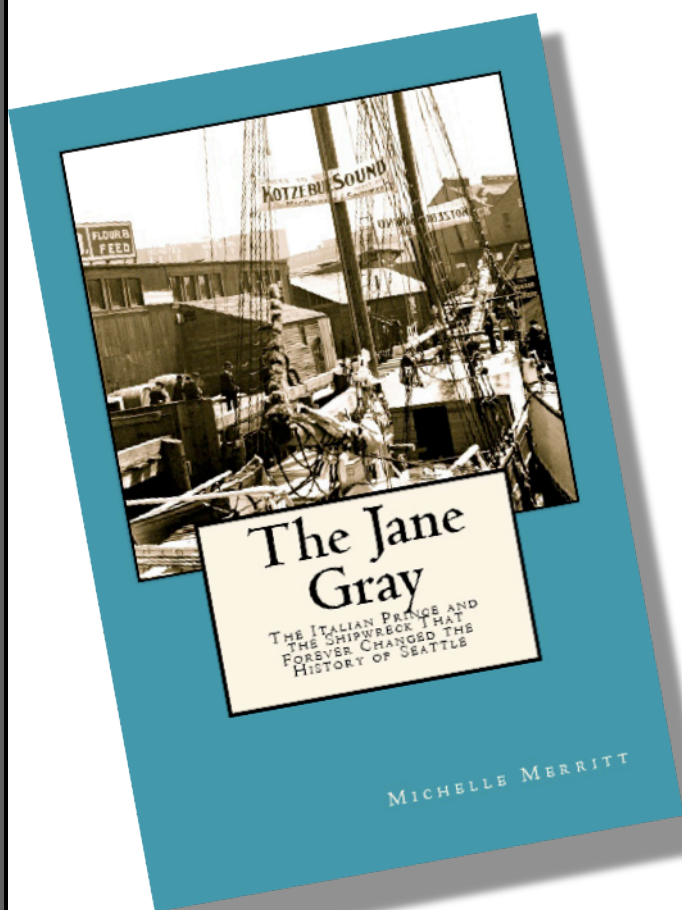


The Jane Gray

A True Story

By Michelle Merritt

Was it "Wholesale Murder"?



Funded by Prince Luigi of Italy, Major Ingraham set sail for the Alaska gold fields in the spring of 1898. In addition to the first superintendent of Seattle schools, the people on board included the first mayor of Bremerton, the owner of the *Snohomish Eye*, University of Washington football players, several friends of Prince Luigi, a missionary family, and a myriad of other well-known men.

Three days after the schooner Jane Gray departed Seattle, the ship went down in a moderate gale - hardly a storm that should sink a "staunch and seaworthy" whaler in a "hatful of wind."

Only twenty-seven of the sixty-four on board survived. In the aftermath of the wreck, the entire community was shocked and grief-stricken. Some of the survivors mounted a search for the missing, while others sought restitution from the powerful MacDougall and Southwick outfitting firm.

Ownership of the vessel came into question and a nasty, protracted legal battle ensued, revealing fraud, deceit and corruption at every turn. Rumors and speculation as to the cause of the disaster consumed conversations around the world. She'd been wrecked before. Was she a "hoo-doo," cursed with sailor's superstition? Or were MacDougall and Southwick at fault?

Michelle Merritt is a native of Washington State. Born at Seattle's Providence Hospital in 1964 to a Ballard family, she was raised on the East side of the Cascade Mountains. In 1982, Michelle returned to Seattle, where she attended the University of Washington for a short time. Dissatisfied and impatient with academic life, she joined the United States Air Force as a reservist and received a certificate in Aircraft Maintenance technology.

In the subsequent years, Ms. Merritt enjoyed a long career in the automotive industry, worked a brief stint as an insurance agent, owned a restaurant, and later served as the operations director for Tacoma Tall Ships 2008. She holds a current merchant mariner's license and is working toward accumulating enough sea time to become a licensed captain on international vessels.

Since the 2010 publication of her first book, *One Night in Rome: And the End of Life as I knew It*, Michelle has traveled by land, air, and sea to Italy, Monaco, France, England, Fiji, Turkey, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, and forty-five states within the United States of America.

She is the mother of two grown sons and a grandmother who now calls Tacoma, Washington her home.

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