

The First Two Families to Settle on South Hill

The following is from an article titled, "Puyallup Heights Pioneers Headed by Two Families", from the August 9, 1940 "Puyallup Valley Tribune."

If "Father" Louis Kupfer, one of the first settlers on South Hill, had not gone fishing with an Indian friend one spring day and seen the smoke rising from a locomotive down in the Valley, there is no telling how long the Puyallup Heights pioneers might have remained in ignorance of the existence of Puyallup. That is the isolated position described by the sons of the first settlers on the hill.

Two of the oldest families on the hill are the Kupfers and the Mosolfs, who arrived within a few months of each other about 1877, from Oregon and Steilacoom, and for many years were the only close neighbors. George Mosolf and his family chose 160 acres fronting on what is now 25th Avenue Southeast, opposite the entrance to Wildwood Park, on which the original two-story frame house burned last February 25, (1940).

From the Mosolfs, there was a sort of trail southwest to the Kupfer homestead, opposite what is now Willows Corner. Here the Kupfers had cleared "by mainly strength and awkwardness," according to Fred Kupfer, space for a one-room log cabin and small garden. A stand of timber so dense "We couldn't see out the back door" covered the entire hill.

Neighbors Few

Neighbors were few and far between. Farther out toward Graham, on the left side of the present Graham road, was the homestead of "Swamp" Muehler (pronounced Miller by the old timers).

Here Pioneer Muehler built a pretentious frame house, which still stands although it is much older than fifty years. (The old Muehler ranch was between 152nd & 160th Street East off 110th Av E).

Children of those families first attended the school built by Fathers Mosolf, Kupfer, Breckon, Slythe and Mankosky, on the site of the original Woodland School, recently torn down. A long way to walk to school? Well, the pioneers never thought it was a long way to any place in those days. The school was finished in 1885. The Mosolf children came down the trail to meet the Kupfers and they proceeded west over a trail following, roughly, the present Lakeview Road (112th ST E). This was by no means a pleasant stroll, for there were frequent logs as much as 10 and 12 feet high, to climb over.

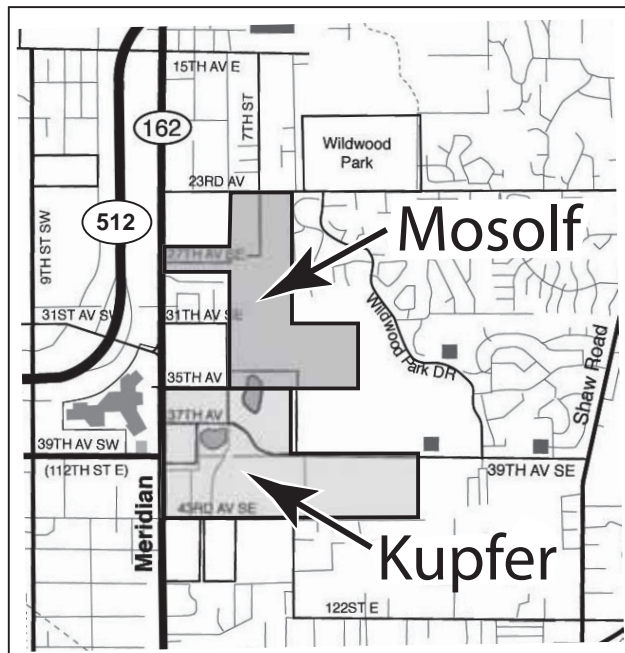
First Students

The name of the very first teacher has been lost, but the school term was finished by Miss Lena Ground of Spanaway, with George, John and Joe Mosolf and Fred Kupfer among those in the first group of students.

In the early nineties the Firgrove school district was formed, and a school

building was built about at the intersection of the pipeline and the Rabbit Farms road. It preceded the organization of the Puyallup Heights district by many years.

In the earliest days, trading was done either at Alderton, connected by trail down the hill or with Steilacoom reached by the Military Road, which crossed Meridian in front of the Old Mill. (The old dance hall located West of Meridian between 123rd ST CT. E & 128th ST. E, behind South Hill RV Center).



The approximate boundaries of the Kupfer and Mosolf properties shown over a current South Hill map. (boundaries based on the 1915 Pierce County map showing property ownership).

Bring Own Seats

John Mosolf recalls that, on one of the rare occasions when the men folks could be persuaded to attend church at Alderton before the road to Puyallup was opened, they passed the Churchward family returning from their service. They were climbing up the log chute west of Alderton, carrying their chairs on which they sat in church. The usual Sunday occupation of the men was hunting.

Speaking of hunting, deer were so plentiful that a certain Indian friend of the Kupfers shot 33 in one winter on and near their place. The deer ate so much garden produce they were nuisances. The Indian cared only for the hides and kept the Kupfer family, who saw tough sledding at first, in fresh meat all winter. Fishing was so common it was scarcely a sport. Fred Kupfer remembers that salmon ran up into the creek in Yeager's draw, so thick one could cross on their backs—which we suspect is a tiny bit of exaggeration, but colorful nevertheless.

Carve First Road

The same group of early settlers who built the first school carved out the first road into Puyallup. It followed the Lakeview Road from Willows Corner to West 9th Street, made a right angle turn east again to the foot of the hill at what is now 5th Street Southwest and through into town. Meridian Street was first made by short stretches, connecting one place with another. It was first opened to the city limits, 25th Avenue, and then gradually to Kupfers where the road ran close to the house. When the road was straightened out in later years, the course was changed so Fred Kupfer's place now sits far enough back in the yard to be an invigorating stroll. Traffic was nil and strangers who passed were few. This is indicated by the fact that hop growers withdrew from \$500 to \$1000 and kept it for days in the house to pay off the hop-pickers. There was no fear of burglary, and as far as anyone remembers, nothing was ever stolen.

Editors Note:

More will be covered on South Hill's early residents in future issues. If any of our members can add anything on this subject, please submit it to Paul Hackett. See last page for contact info.

Growing Up in the Berry Fields

by member Helen (Heil) Rohlman

Our South Hill community was basically a rural agricultural area in the 30s and 40s.

In the Woodland School area we had four businesses: Howard Allen's Grocery off 112th Street and Cedar Road (80th Avenue East), the Woodland Grocery owned by E.C. Allen (father of Ted

& Harry) on the corner of Woodland Avenue and Knapp Road (104th Street East), and along Fruitland Avenue we had Gilliland's Grocery and "Gut" Johnson's Tallow Works. Boy, did it stink!

The young people, wanting money for new school clothes, were destined to follow the crops, as no Child Labor laws were in effect at that time.

We started the season picking strawberries for Lester and Faye Goelzer, Bill's parents. They were wonderful people to work for. From my recollection some of the hired pickers were: Patty (Van Horn) Goelzer and her mother-Mildred, some of the Parks girls—Carol and Joan (Parks) Vosler, Bob Crabb and the Heil girls (Mildred Dobbs and Helen Rohlman) and their Mom Helena. The Moms worked daily with their children so as to guarantee their "bonus" which was extra money given as an incentive to work the whole season.

Then the raspberry season started and South Hill had few large raspberry fields to be harvested, so Cliff Miller (NIF) and his wife Hazel Whitford Miller Goheen would pickup a bunch of kids in the Fruitland and Woodland areas in a big berry truck, take us to the fields and return us home in the afternoon. Some names I remember are: Barbara Huff, the Strandley girls—Lillian, Betty and Eleanor, Joan (Parks) Vosler and sister Carol, Patty (Van Horn) Goelzer, several Templin brothers, Julia and Lynn Williams, Ronald Crabtree and the Heil girls again.

Everyone loved to pick for NIF and Hazel! They were always fair, not mean-spirited, had lots of drinking water in the berry shed, paid a reasonable bonus at season's end—and the absolute best incentive of all was a trip to NIF and Hazel's Clear Lake cabin for a few exciting days at the lake.

Hazel organized the food for the meals, NIF transported us up to the lake in his big berry truck. We kids ranged in ages from 11 to 16 and were excited to toss our bed rolls, extra clothes and bathing suits in the truck and head for the lake.

Hazel was a teacher and everything was well organized and duties assigned. Some of the older girls helped with meals and cooking, older boys cut and gathered wood and the younger ones were on KP or garbage detail or just plain "go-fers."

NIF and Hazel didn't have a well on their property so kids were paired up to take the row boat and row across Clear Lake to a small spring to get buckets of good drinking water.

Well, I was about 12 years old and my paired partner Lynn Williams was about 11 and we were selected to row for spring water. Now, what do you think these land-lubbers knew about a row boat? The closest thing I had ever maneu-

vered on water was an old wooden raft on our pond dipping for frogs and poli-wogs.

So, he took one oar and I took another and off we went. We pulled to the left and pulled to the right and made lots of circles but made little headway. We rowed and rowed and it got warmer and warmer and we were not even halfway across the lake and I said to Lynn.

“Can you see the cabin?”

He squinted and said, “NO!”

“Well,” I said, “If you can’t see the cabin, they sure can’t see us.”

So, we dipped our buckets in the lake and headed for the cabin and nobody was the wiser. (And you think today’s youth are smart, they had nothing on the kids from Woodland.)

Blackberries, beans and bulb jobs were also available but most families only had one vehicle and the Dads generally used it to go to work and so the kids were often relegated to find jobs closer to home.

There was little leisure time left during our summer vacation after the berry picking season, but it was always exciting to take the Woodland bus to Tacoma to select our school clothes for the coming year.

Helen (Heil) Rohlman
April 14, 2007



Help Us at the Fair!

The South Hill Historical Society will be part of the Puyallup Fair again this September. Our booth will be in the Pavilion Education complex. The Pavilion Education complex is the first complex to the south as you enter the main, Gold Gate entrance to the fair.

We will have a booth set up from Friday, September 5th through the following Tuesday, September 9. As done last year, we are asking our membership for volunteers to represent our society at the booth.

This is your chance to get involved promoting our organization. All volunteers get a free vendor’s gate pass with free parking. If you want to volunteer act quickly. This is our most popular volunteer activity.

Get hold of Bill Goelzer, our Fair team leader—organizer—coordinator, at 253-841-4149

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In Memoriam

The South Hill Historical Society
regrets the passing of

Don Otto
April 28, 1917 - May 26, 2008

South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

City _____

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Home E-mail Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____ Renewal, check here

Annual Dues: Society membership \$25.00

Note Please do not send cash.

Make check or M.O. payable to South Hill Historical Society and mail with this application to:
SHHS Membership, 11711 92ND AV E, Puyallup, WA 98373

From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

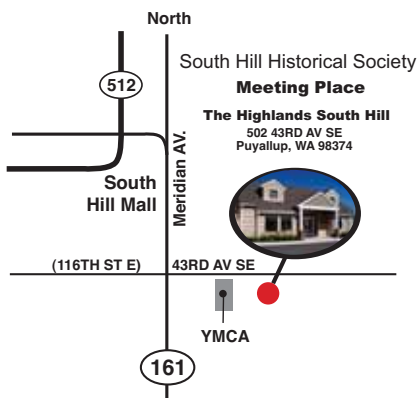
Membership dues and donations are our only source of income so we can publish the newsletter, tape interviews, make displays, pay for the paper, stamps, storage material, and so on. A sticky note reminder is inserted into your newsletter if you are at or near your renewal date.

Please don't forget that we are a 501(C) (3) non-profit organization. Dues, donations, etc. are fully deductible from your income taxes, if you are able to do so.

Where to Find Us

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month 11:15 AM (*No meetings July and August*) at the Highlands in the Community Center . This complex is located at 502 43RD AV SE, adjacent to and east of the Mel Korum YMCA.

We welcome you to our monthly meetings. For more information contact our former president, Paul Hackett, at **(253) 845-7691**.



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Puyallup WA 98373

Our Current Members

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To: