



History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society
South Hill, Pierce County, Washington

Volume 12 Issue 4 Fall 2014

HERITAGE CORRIDOR

South Hill Ahead The Longmire-Biles Crossing

by Jerry Bates

Come every October we remember the 1853 Longmire-Biles wagon train. These immigrants were the first white settlers arriving in Puget Sound Country by crossing the Cascades over the Naches Pass — establishing the north fork of the Oregon Trail. This event is special for our Society since the pioneers passed through our community. We have written much on this subject over the

years for this newsletter, including member Carl Vest's articles for the *Puyallup Herald*. We usually focus on our small section of that long trail west; what we call our Heritage Corridor. It follows the route taken across South Hill. The path is traced with roadside markers containing historical information regarding the corridor's history as an ancient Indian trail, wagon train crossing, and

Longmire-Biles Wagon Train: White River to Puyallup River

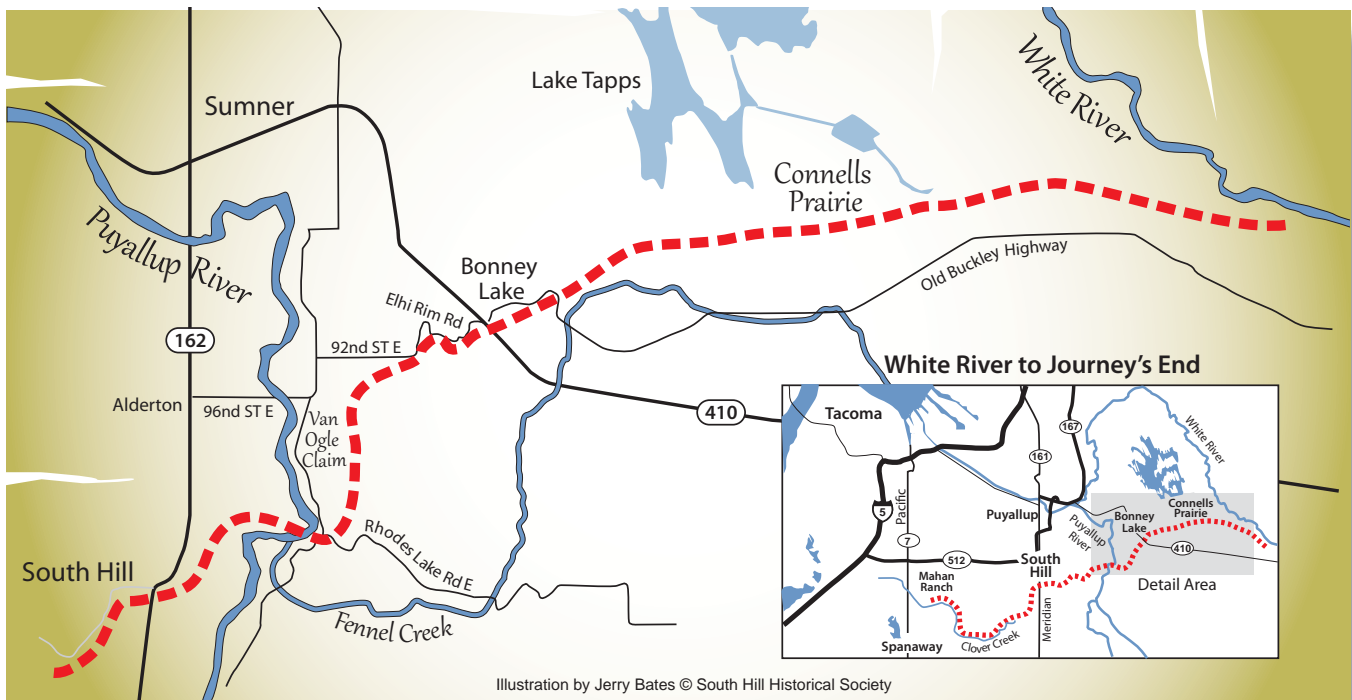


Illustration by Jerry Bates © South Hill Historical Society

This map traces a likely route taken from the White River to the Puyallup River by the Longmire-Biles Wagon Train of 1853. The route from the White River to the Puyallup River Valley is based on a tour and research compiled by the Greater Bonney Lake Historical Society in 2012. The exact route is left to speculation. However, we do know for certain they camped on Connells Prairie and came to the Puyallup River at the mouth of Fennel Creek on the Van Ogle land claim, as recorded in James Longmire's diary.

military road.

For a bit of a change, in our Fall 2011 issue we covered the last and final leg of the Longmire-Biles crossing *after* leaving South Hill. This portion of the pioneer trail started from our final trail marker, Woodland Av and 160th St. E and followed Clover Creek to the last campsite at the Mahan Ranch, today's Brookdale Golf Course.

In this issue we'll continue that idea and look at the part of journey just *prior* to their crossing of today's South Hill. This leg of the journey was from the White River and Connells Prairie to the Puyallup River.

At the Summit

After camping at the summit of Naches Pass, our pioneers pushed forward on their journey, lowering their wagons over a treacherous embankment down to the Greenwater River. Seven "dark days" followed descending the Cascade slopes, along the Greenwater and White Rivers (basically skirting today's state highway 410.) They crossed the rivers twenty-three times from bank to bank, around over and under huge fallen trees, living off salal berries and roots — a route deemed impossible to make by wagon. Our tired and hungry travelers, finally, left the White River for the last time and camped at Connells Prairie. Relatively unobstructed land lay before them.

Their exact path from Connells Prairie to the Puyallup River can only be speculated on, as is much of their journey from this point to the final campsite at the Mahan Ranch near Spanaway. Most likely the old Indian trail system used for thousands of years from eastern Washington to Puget Sound via South Hill formed part of the route. After camping at Connells Prairie, James Longmire, in his diary, only mentions crossing the Puyallup River where Fennel Creek empties, our only remaining landmark. At that time this part of the Puyallup River formed the western edge of the Van Ogle's land claim. (see map).

Arriving at the Puyallup River

This from James Longmire's diary: *...we found the river low and filled with humpback salmon. We armed ourselves with various weapons, clubs, axes and whatever we could get and went fishing. Every man who could strike a blow got a fish, and such a feast we had not enjoyed since we had potatoes boiled in the jackets, but fish was far ahead*

of potatoes. John Mayer declared they were the best fish he had ever eaten. We had a royal feast. Some of our party was up all night cooking and eating fish. All relished them but Mrs. Longmire, who was feeling indisposed, but she fortunately got a delicacy—rare to her—a pheasant, which she bought from an Indian—her first purchase on Puget Sound, and which caused merriment in our part, as the Indian was perfect nude.

When the locals heard of the arrival they began receiving visitors. The members of the party were embarrassed by their ragged appearance. Longmire says: *...But our new friends were equal to the emergency and our embarrassment was soon dispelled by copious draughts of 'good old bourbon' to which we did full justice, while answering questions amidst introductions and hearty handshaking. This was on the eighth day of October.*

The next leg of their journey lay ahead, climbing out of the valley before they started their trek across South Hill. The most likely path they took up the hill was not far from the banks of the Puyallup, following today's Old Military Road that defines our Historic Corridor.

For more Information on the Naches Pass see the Naches Pass website nachestrail.org. To download the Greater Bonney Lake Historical Society tour guide and research of the route see "Tour Guides" on the Naches Pass website. For a good overview, the "Naches Pass Trail Brochure" is also downloadable on the site plus many more links to relevant material. The SHHS website southhillhistory.com contains all past newsletter and *Puyallup Herald* articles we've published on the Naches Pass. See the side bar headings "History" and "Newsletters" on our homepage.

***Help the newsletter
Do you have a story about old times on
South Hill?***

Personal experiences and past events are of interest to all our members, and it makes for a better newsletter! We are glad to assist with writing or editing your article.

Contact Jerry Bates
mail@southhillhistory.com

Puyallup Hatchery Foundation Here for September Meeting

by Jerry Bates

Editor's Note: Our readers may recall an article about the Puyallup Historical Hatchery Foundation in the Summer newsletter. The hatchery society had invited interested members of our society for a tour. While visiting them last July, we were impressed with the work they had accomplished. We extended an invitation to our tour hosts, Patty Carter and Richard Johnson, to speak at our September General Meeting to share their experiences forming the Puyallup Historical Hatchery Foundation.

Paul Hackett introduced Patty Carter and Richard Johnson. Patty began with her personal biography. She was born in England, a “military brat,” said Patty. “My father was a member of the US Air Force.” After his retirement from the Air Force, having living in many places around the world, the family settled in Puyallup. Patty graduated from Puyallup High School. She now lives near Clark’s Creek and DeCoursey Park on her “little farm with chickens.”

As we covered in the summer newsletter and Patty related to our group, Pacific Sea Foods was set to take over the hatchery—fencing it off to start a commercial fish farming operation. The community living around the hatchery was not pleased with the prospect of a commercial operation in their neighborhood in addition to losing their beloved old hatchery, in operation since 1949. They raised a ruckus and organized an effort to save the hatchery from a takeover by the seafood company. Patty Carter, along with like-minded neighbors, went into action. A protest was organized using social media and flyers.

They recruited help from local legislators Hans Zeiger and Bruce Dammeier, along with Steve Vermillion and the Puyallup City Council. Local outdoor groups also joined the effort. After a city

council meeting, they seized their chance to talk to Jim Scott, head of the Fisheries Department. Patty and a several others made their case during an intense two-hour session with Mr. Scott. Eventually, Pacific Sea Foods decided to back out of the deal.

After Pacific Sea Foods decided against taking over the hatchery, Patty and her group asked themselves, “now what?” They made their plans and months later received confirmation from Jim Scott—an OK to create a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding,) a contract of understanding to form the Puyallup Hatchery Foundation. They began the 501(c)(3) process as a non-profit organization and the society was born. The state gave them a decapitated duplex on the hatchery property, which was turned into their Education Center. Patty described all the volunteer effort that mushroomed to create this impressive, ADA compliant, facility (see the 2014 Summer newsletter).

Patty’s talk was accompanied by many slides of the hatchery, society supporters, and activities.

They are currently creating a program to aid budget-tight elementary schools to organize field trips to the Education Center,

where children can not only learn about the hatchery but watershed care. The hatchery includes 80 acres of watershed environment along Clark’s Creek. Patty urged us to join them, asking or concluding “what better way to leave something better behind while preserving the hatchery?”

Richard Johnson followed Patty’s talk. He described his early career, starting with his Vietnam War era duty in the air force, from which he retired after twelve years. After his military service he went back to school, graduating from the University of Washington with a Bachelor of Science in fisheries biology. He worked for the Ballard Locks with the Corps of Engineers, NOAH salmon division and finally landed the job he always wanted—hatchery manager, working



Patty Carter & Richard Johnson of the Puyallup Hatchery Foundation

for the Muckleshoot Tribe. Today, recently retired, he lives close to the Puyallup Hatchery. He offered to help the new Hatchery Society and little by little became more involved after his retirement. Today, he is on the society's Board of Directors and its Vice President.

Richard explained the hatchery has changed little since it was built in 1948. The Puyallup hatchery's purpose is to raise trout to stock lakes in Peirce, King, Thurston, and Lewis counties. This year they are also raising endangered White River spring Chinook salmon for fishing and conservation. The salmon will be raised from egg into fry, fins clipped for identification and taken to acclimation ponds for the White River water. From the White River they will swim to the Puyallup River, out to Puget Sound and the Pacific Ocean.

Richard is currently working with Puyallup High School's Environmental Science natural resources teacher and FFA advisor David Wetzell, to bring his students out to the hatchery to experience hatchery management as a possible career.

Of local interest, Richard mentioned the hatchery would supply Bradley Lake with 500 to 600 trout this year.



Vintage Puyallup Fish Hatchery photo — little changed today.

Both Richard and Patty, as of the September meeting, were busy organizing a “Salmon Homecoming Event” for October 11. They invited all to come to the hatchery and celebrate the return of salmon to the Puyallup River Watershed — tours, food, music, with science and art activities for kids.

Richard concluded saying the best time to visit is in the fall, the height of hatchery activity. Visitors are always welcome.



Shown is the mural now decorating the lobby of the Wells Fargo Bank, South Hill Branch at 160th ST E and Meridian. The Wells Fargo San Francisco office contacted our Society last April in need of original historic images of South Hill to incorporate in a planned mural for the South Hill Branch. We submitted five high-resolution scans from our limited original photograph collection. They were excited by our submissions; however, only one was used. Notice the center image of the hop harvest. The photograph was taken at the Kupfer hop farm shortly after the turn of the century (1900-1910). Today our harvesters would be standing in the Willows Shopping Center, current location of BECU Credit Union, Petco, Key Bank, T.J. Maxx (formerly Borders book store) among other businesses (Meridian and 39th AV E).

The Spirit of Agnes Huth Visits the Society

by Jerry Bates

Agnes Muehler Huth spoke to us from her grave — with help from our October general meeting guest, historical reenactor/storyteller, Karen Haas. Karen created this performance for an evening “Cemetery Tour” given every July at the Tacoma Cemetery. This yearly event features eight reenactors portraying people who rise from their tombstones to tell those gathered about their lives.

Agnes Muehler Huth (1864-1938) was the daughter of Laura and Carl (Swamp) Muehler of South Hill — a name familiar to all our members.

Dressed in her 1930's attire, Agnes (Karen) spoke to our group, as from the cemetery performance. “I was told people would be coming to the cemetery this evening...seeking spirits of the past. Well, as the wife of a brew master I can assure you, you have indeed come to the right place.”

Agnes went into much detail sharing her life's triumphs and sorrows. She spoke to us of her early years at the Swamp Muehler place, then just a rough log cabin in swampy woods. With hard work clearing and draining the land, it turned into a thriving fifty-acre hop farm. Agnes grew up on South Hill among a community of Germans. She recalled fond memories of families gathering together to harvest the hops. Eventually the Ball-Wood road was built (Meridian) to help bring those harvests to market. In the 1890s, she met Anton Huth. Young Anton Huth and his business partner had moved to Tacoma in 1888 to establish the first lager beer brewery in the city--naming their company the “Puget Sound Brewery.” Agnes and Anton married in 1891 and had four children. The brewery grew, totaling twelve fine, new red brick buildings at 25th and Jefferson, just south of downtown Tacoma and distributed all over the Northwest and the Orient. The couple grew wealthy, built a fine home with a view of Commencement Bay, and they enjoyed a “summer” home on Lake Spanaway. Her husband created an empire of vast real estate holdings and mining properties throughout the Northwest.

Sadly, the business collapsed when Prohibition came to Washington State in 1916--”[my] hus-

band was never the same,” said Agnes. After 25 years of marriage he died, and two years later their [older] daughter died followed shortly by the death of their baby daughter.

Until she met them again in heaven, Agnes knew life must go on. Using the abandoned brewery buildings and joining with her older children and former husband's partner, they founded the National Coconut Butter Company. Using the byproduct of the coconut oil they started another company, the National Soap Company, which manufactured Play-Mate Soap for laundry and bath. She continued to grow her husband's empire.



**Historical reenactor and storyteller
Karen Haas**

Later in life she enjoyed a “peaceful contentment” with her philanthropic activities while living in her fine home. But during her final years things grew dark as World War Two approached and she read of Hitler “spreading his evil” in the Sudetenland of her birth.

To us, the living, Agnes concluded her visit with these words, “remember you are the guardians of the memories of we who have gone before.”

Following her performance Karen added “extra things,” reminding us many of the old brewery

buildings are still standing at 25th and Jefferson in downtown Tacoma. Agnes was involved in the construction of other historical Tacoma buildings including the old Elks' Lodge currently slated for restoration.

A conversation among the meeting attendees followed on many topics including the German community in our area during the war years. Many at the meeting lived through those years, passing on memories to the younger guests.

A Tribute to a Friend Olive McDonough

by Debbie Burtnett

Our historical society has suffered great losses recently with the passings of Roy Rinker, Bill Stover, Bonnie Starkel, and Olive "Bubbie" McDonough.

Although only a resident on the Hill for eight years, friendships formed with my neighbors, colleagues, and historical society members. But, every time we lose someone, we find out what we didn't know about him or her.

"Bubbie" worked at the Fair with me, along with others. We were surrounded by professional art upstairs and student art in the Education Building. Yet, I didn't know that Olive was an accomplished artist who had one-woman shows, entered juried contests, and loved bazaars. She made hand-painted Christmas ornaments at Ft. Lewis for the Officers' Wives on order—I wonder if she realized that military families carried her talent all over the world? When Olive told me she could no longer work at the Fair, I was sad.

The Parks' girls miss their older sister. Joan Vosler said she always looked up to Bubbie and admired her as a "glamorous woman with a sense of style and an excellent eye for color." Joan has six of Olive's paintings in her home. I'll remember that Olive shared memories at Society meetings that warmed your heart. Joan recalled, "She had a smile right to the end."

This past summer, Ora Clark encouraged Society members to "write your life story." We should all follow his advice using either written or oral tra-

dition (interview.) An excellent guide to recording one's biography was prepared by the Smithsonian Institution. You can find it at: <http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/pdf/interviewingguide.pdf>.

Paintings by Olive McDonough



From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, poppa-ben2002@yahoo.com, 14602 106th Avenue Court E., South Hill, WA 98374.

Also, 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. If you need a receipt for tax purposes, contact Ben.

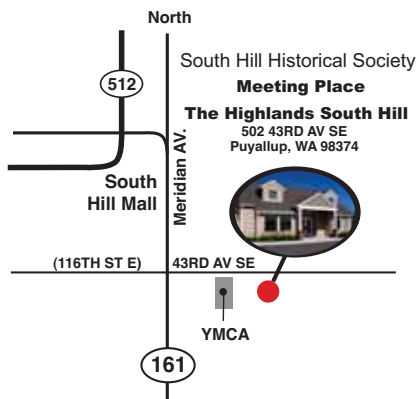
Dues Reminder

I will attach a sticky note to the Society newsletter mailed closest to your renewal date. **No need to fill out the membership form unless there is a change of some kind.**

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month, 11:00 AM, (no meetings July and August) at The Highlands in the Community Center. This complex is located at 502 43rd Ave. SE, adjacent to and east of the Mel Korum YMCA.

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

Where to Find Us



In Memoriam

The South Hill Historical Society regrets the passings of

Roy Rinker
Bonnie Starkel
Bill Stover

Our Current Members

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Andy G. Anderson | Laurienne Stewart Minnich |
| Andy & Ruth Anderson | Kaye Murrell |
| Elizabeth Anema | Carolyn Nelson |
| Marion Armstrong | Dorothy Nelson |
| Bob Ballou | Juanita & John Nordin |
| Teresa Best | Mark & Dorothy Norris |
| Jerry Bates | Gloria O'Kelly |
| Katherine Bennett | Ron & Lois Pearson |
| Marilyn Burnett | Wes & Suzy Perkinson |
| Debbie Burtnett | Ben Peters |
| Vernon Cox | Bill Riley |
| Dave & Patti Curtiss | Bernice Fisher Rinehart |
| Karen Day | Roy and Sheila Rinker |
| James H. Dixon | Vern Rockstad |
| Pat Drake | Helen Rohlman |
| Joan Ellis | Earl Root |
| Arthur & Luverne Foxford | Stan & Margery Salmon |
| Ira Gabrielson | Bonnie Starkel |
| Don & Mary Glaser | Lori Stock |
| Paul Hackett | Bill Stover |
| Alberta Hagen | Marge (Crosson) Swain |
| Cecil & Doris Herbert | Ralph & Yvonne Thorpe |
| Evelyn Swalander Hess | Margo L. & Joe Tucci |
| Wilma Walsworth Hinshaw | Lee Van Pevenage |
| Alan & Linda Hoenhous | Carl Vest |
| Joe & Rhoda Hoenhous | Neil & Celia Vincent |
| Maybelle Hoenhous | Joan Vosler |
| Matt Holm | W. Louise Walsworth |
| Leslie Huff | W. Lynn Williams |
| John Knierim | Lenore Nicolet Winton |
| Mike Kupfer | Ed Zeiger |
| Art & Lorraine Larson | Hans Zeiger |
| Terry Maves | Allan S. & Ellen M. Zulauf |
| Olive McDonough | Beverly Zook |

South Hill Historical Society Officers

- President, **Bob Ballou***
Vice-President, (vacancy)
Secretary, (vacancy)
*Public Relations Coordinator, **Paul Hackett***
*Research Coordinator, **Carl Vest***
*Treasurer, **Ben Peters***
*Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, **Jerry Bates***

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 Editor Jerry Bates, Editor-at-Large Debbie Burtnett
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South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

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, 14602 106th Avenue Court E.
South Hill, WA 98374-4905**



14602 106th Avenue Court E.
South Hill, WA 98374-4905

To: