



Yes, South Hill does have a history!

The north fork of the Oregon Trail (Naches Trail) crossed South Hill on its way to Fort Steilacoom. And did you know that the Willows Dance Hall was the social destination on South Hill in the 1930's?

In 2001 the South Hill Historical Society was organized to trace the history of South Hill from the late 1800's to the present. We are asking you to join us in collecting various types of historical material to preserve for future generations.

We welcome your contributions of photographs, narratives, historical artifacts and other memorabilia. Copies of original documents are also a good resource.

With this first newsletter, we want to introduce new folks to our organization. In the future, quarterly newsletters will be mailed primarily to SHHS members.

Tracing Our History

Since there is no designated format for our research, the leaders of SHHS have designed a plan for discovering and organizing our past. Areas of interest which have been identified are: maps, roads, crops, forestry, stump farming, schools, business, government, churches, community organizations, published history, biographies, personal interviews, and athletics. More categories will be added as needed.

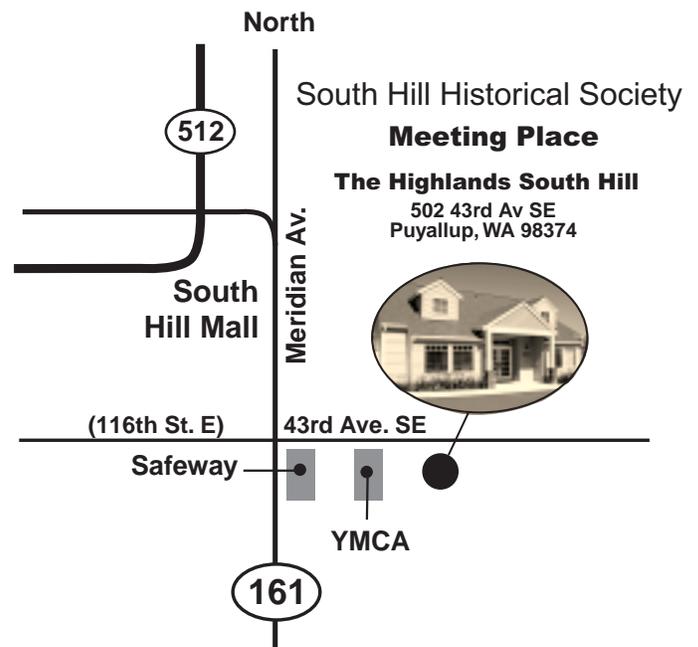
Boundaries

"South Hill" for historical purposes is defined as the area south of the Puyallup Fairgrounds (15th Ave. SW, which was the original boundary of the town of Puyallup) up "the Hill" south and then south to 204th St (beyond Fred Meyer on Meridian). On the east the boundary is the "ridge" overlooking the Orting Valley, and on the west the boundary is Woodland Avenue (or 70th Ave. E.).

Meetings

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month at 10:45 AM at the Highlands in the Community Center. This complex is located at 502 43rd AV SE, adjacent to and east of the YMCA.

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



South Hill Historical Society Officers

President, Paul Hackett
Vice-President, Carl Vest
Secretary, Carolyn Nelson
Treasurer, Ben Peters
Newsletter Editor, Jerry Bates

Some of Our Achievements So Far

To the casual observer it may seem that members of the Society are doing nothing but asking an awful lot of questions and conducting many-many video and audio recording sessions. And, while it is true that the gathering of information has been the main thrust of the Society to date, some of those inputs, supplied by long-time residents, are being turned around and provided to the general public in a number of ways. As you drive around South Hill, for example, you'll notice in many places that historic road names have been added to signs below current street identifiers. Another visual indicator of significance is the marking of the Naches Trail in places where it crossed South Hill; sometimes called the North Branch of the Oregon Trail. Interpretative signs showing the location of the Trail have been placed in five locations across South Hill. Several members of the Society supplied data and worked with members of the County government to get these markers in place. For this effort the County recognized the Society by a Proclamation, which was presented to the President, Paul Hackett, in an impressive ceremony.

In another sphere, for the past three years one member of the Society has been working, along with many other South Hill citizens, on the County's South Hill Community Plan. This Plan is making its way through the review process as of this writing and probably will be passed into law by the County Council and County Executive in early spring. The Plan recognizes, documents, and designates the South Hill Historical Society as the group the County will work with to recognize and preserve historical properties and areas of South Hill. Moreover, members of the Society helped prepare the historical discussions of the Plan, all of which will become part of the basis for making the Plan a legal entity (a County Ordinance).

Some writings are also starting to emerge from the data being given to Society members. Carl Vest has written a paper about the starting of the road system on South Hill. Specifically he has written a paper about the beginnings of what is now known as Meridian Avenue. Using the files of Pierce

County and inputs from long-time residents, Carl has described the development of the first formal road building project on South Hill. At the time, in the late 1880s, it was known as the Ball-Wood Road. The road was the result of a petition from the local residents. The thoroughfare began in the vicinity of Pioneer Avenue in what is now Puyallup. It ended at a hop farm on what is now 160th Street, a distance of about five miles. A copy of Carl's paper has been accepted into the collection of the South Hill Public Library.

A second paper is under preparation by Carl Vest and Ward Bradley. It is a description of a finding in what is now known as Bradley Lake. When Ward Bradley was removing peat moss from the depression that is now the lake, he discovered a layer of volcanic ash. Using the depth and location of the ash, the source of the deposit is being investigated. This is a significant geologic finding on South Hill and illustrates that South Hill's history goes back much further than the human history that we all think about. The writing for the report is mostly complete, but has not been released to the public. Some of the facts are still being verified and technical points researched.

It is interesting to note that the Bradley Lake property at 103rd Ave. and Meridian originally belonged to the Mosolf family. The good peat soil made it possible for the Mosolfs to farm hops. Later the peat was removed and sold by Ward Bradley.

The Society has also discovered that South Hill was the target of a Japanese Balloon Bomb during World War II. The facts of this event are being investigated and will be reported when we have more knowledge. At least two sources have given the Society the location of the bombing, but additional facts are being researched before the writing of a paper about the event.

So, in summary, a number of accomplishments of the Society can be reported. It is important to gather as much data as possible for additional reporting.



One of five interpretive signs showing the location of the Naches Trail/North branch of the Oregon Trail on South Hill.

South Hill's Original Planned Road, Ball-Wood

(Meridian Avenue or 102nd Avenue)

by Carl Vest

On the 29th day of December 1888, eighty-eight citizens of Pierce County, Washington Territory, submitted a petition to the Board of County Commissioners of Pierce County requesting that a road be built. They asked that the route start at a point where the south line of the corporate limits of the town of Puyallup crossed the divider between Sections 27 & 28 in Township 20. Then they asked that the road go south, between Sections 27 and 28, and 33 and 34, in the Township. Finally, they proposed that the thoroughfare be built on into Township 19, on a line between Sections 3 and 4, 9 and 10, 15, and 16, and finally Sections 21 and 22. At the South end of Section 22 they requested that the road go East for three-quarters of a mile, on the line between Sections 22 and 27, to the Southwest corner of land owned by Carl Muhler in Section 22. Mr. Muhler was a prominent hop farmer of that period.

As part of the petition, two individuals assumed the obligation for paying for the survey and the laying-out of the requested road. Harvey M. Ball and George Wood, in a certificate dated February 4, 1889, agreed to "... pay all costs and expenses that may be incurred by reason of the view and survey of said road,..."

Using contemporary identification, the road was to start in what is now the city of Puyallup, at about Pioneer Ave. It would follow what is now Meridian Avenue up the hill and on south to what is now 160th Street. At 160th Street the highway was to turn east for three-quarters of a mile. At this point in time you can turn east on 160th but it is not a through way. You can get no farther than the Pierce County Sheriff's station or the Pierce County Public Works facility. To get to the terminal point of the original road you must get to 110th Avenue by some other route.

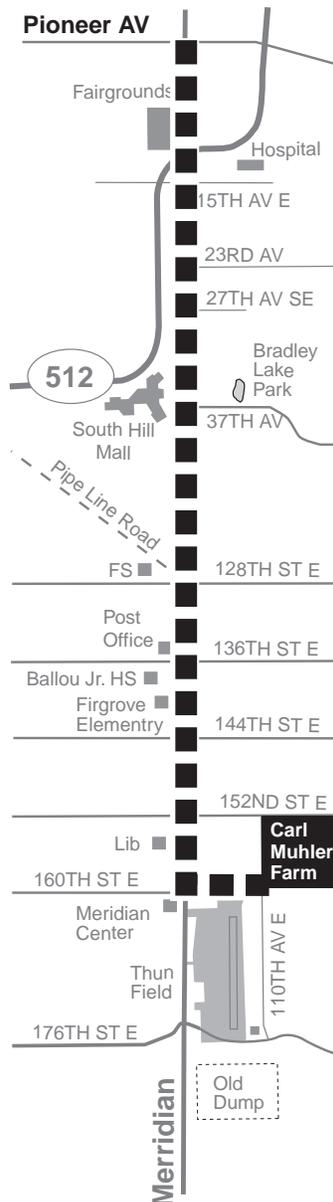
During its February 1889 session the Commissioners accepted the petition and approved that the road be surveyed ("laid out"). A survey party was

assembled consisting of the following: two Viewers, Joseph Kincaid and William Shuman; four Chainmen, J. W. Spencer, Verin Raymoure, and C.S. Bailleys; and two Ax men, George Marcy, and F. M. Stinnette. The work of surveying and laying out the road started on April 30, 1889 and was completed on May 6th. The team reported back to the Commissioners on July 4, 1889, that they had completed their work and that the road had been surveyed and laid out according to the petitioners' wishes.

Since two individuals agreed to pay for the cost of this work, it is interesting to look at what they had to pay. The Pierce County Surveyor, W. H. Bell, received \$30 even though he didn't participate in the fieldwork. For writing and platting the effort Mr. Bell charged \$2.50. Finally, he expensed \$1.80 for traveling nine miles along the route. Thus the total cost for his efforts was \$34.30.

The fieldwork was more costly. Mr. Kincaid, Mr. Shuman, and Mr. Raymoure each received \$10.00 for five days' work. Mr. Spencer, Mr. Marcy, and Mr. Stinnette each received \$12.00 for six days' work. Mr. Bailleys was paid \$2.00 for one day's work. So the total for the team was \$66.00. Combining Mr. Bell's payment and the amounts going to the field team, the total cost was \$102.30. The two people, as promised, paid this amount and the road was named the Ball-Wood Road.

The Ball-Wood road was created by the use of regular County labor. It was apparently used for the next ten to fifteen years, but County records indicate that the southern 1-3/4 miles was probably abandoned before 1915. In 1905 the County Commissioners received a petition to make improvements. It was in 1910, at the southern end of South Hill, that a group of people took the first action to create a road that would eventually be linked to the Ball-Wood Road in the north. In a petition, filed by Mr.



John D. Martin, it was requested that a road be developed starting at what is now 224th Street in Graham, and extending north to connect to the Ball-Wood road, a distance of some four miles. The commissioners agreed to only one and a half miles from what is now Graham. They named this route the Puyallup-Graham Road.

Another attempt was made in 1913 to connect the two roads. But it was not until 1915 that action was taken to make it happen. But the highway that was created was not the Meridian Avenue of today. Rather a thoroughfare was approved that connected what is now 110th Ave with the Puyallup-Graham Road, running through what is now the closed dump. But it did make a complete Puyallup to Graham road. The entire length was then named the Puyallup-Graham Road.

Additional improvements were made in 1926, 1930 and 1931. During this period the road was finally straightened and built up the hill to what is now 176th Street. The name Meridian Avenue for the entire length was not adopted until the late 1930s.



Hear and Share Reminiscences of Days Past on South Hill !

Tuesday, April 15th
11:15 AM
at the
Highlands 502 43rd Ave SE.



This event will be open to all who share an interest in our local history. Come and join the fun!

A light lunch will be provided

Donors & Donations

\$170 - \$200

Ward Bradley, Ben Peters, Friends of the South Hill Library

\$100

Columbia Bank, Frontier Bank

\$70 - \$90

Carl Vest, Don Glaser

\$50

Paul Hackett

\$1 - \$20

Bev Knoll, Olive McDonough, Elva Smith, Eunice Barth Gilliam, Margaret Miller Picha, Leona Starkel, John Thun, Maudine Swalander Rushton, Roger Goelzer, Robert Crabb, Chuck Hoehous, John Mosolf, Kurt Wassman, Roy McDaniels, Stella Jorgenson, Vivian Wepfer, Al Larsen, Lloyd Dodd, Millie Dobbs, Viva (Delano) Ryan, Peter Parks, Bonnie Nicolet Starkel.

Highlands South Hill - Meeting Room
Jerry Bates - Society Logo
Carolyn Nelson - Stamps, Cakes

South Hill Artifacts and Memorabilia

Our collection is small but growing. If you have any items you would be willing to donate, please let us know!

Current Collection

Two-piece buck saw
Wooden butter-making bowl
A brick from the original Woodland School
Railroad spikes from Vosler (Parks) home.
Map rendering of historical sites and markers
Fire District No. 9 map
Old cowbell
Original slat from wooden water pipe