



HERITAGE CORRIDOR

History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society

South Hill, Pierce County, Washington

Volume 11 Issue 3 Summer 2013

A Trip South—125 Years Ago

By Jerry Bates

OUR May General Meeting was a look back in time, with the help of many rare local photographs. Beginning this presentation, we were asked to imagine ourselves in Tacoma, sometime in the late 1890s. Our goal, a trip to the big tree forests miles to the south of the city. Our destination, Eatonville and vicinity. For this PowerPoint journey, our present day tour guide was Andy Anderson of Graham—our speaker for the May meeting.

I have wanted Andy to speak to our society for quite a few years, ever since our paths crossed while he was nearing the final stages of publishing his book *In the Shadow of the Mountain*.

Andy grew up in Graham. Even as a child, he was always curious about the early days of the area. He noticed huge, notched old stumps and the surviving old cabins deep in the woods. In the 1970s and '80s, he began interviewing the local old-timers, then in their eighties and nineties, who easily recalled the very beginnings of Eatonville, Graham, and Kapowsin. He also began gathering old photos from interviewees and followed the leads they gave him—as well as searching library and museum archives. With all those years of research, photos, notes, and interviews, Andy felt a need to put it down in writing. He published *In the Shadow of the Mountain* in 2007. Since then,

his book has gone through two printings and currently the supply is gone—the book is no longer available for purchase. However, a third printing may be on the horizon, but Andy's not sure yet—he will let us know. Meanwhile, if you don't have the book, it's in all the local libraries.

Our Journey

With many fascinating historic photographs to

help take us back in time, we started our trip south. We're in bustling early Tacoma. Tacoma in the 1880s and 1890s was booming, with huge influxes of people looking for work, others looking for land available under the Homestead Act. After arriving in Tacoma, most of these future settlers turned their heads south towards Mt. Rainier, where an abundance of land was still available (prime land



Author/Historian, Andy Anderson of Graham, took the May General Meeting attendees on a time machine, traveling south of Tacoma in the 1890s.

around Tacoma and in the Puyallup Valley was spoken for years earlier). We imagined ourselves wanting to explore the vast area south of Tacoma. If you were newly arrived, without a horse and not wanting to walk, you would probably board the train to Lake Park (Spanaway). The train was called "Old Betsy" and paralleled today's Pacific Avenue, heading south.

Then, the area south of Tacoma was a vast prairie. It was slowly growing over with underbrush

and small trees, since the days when the Hudson Bay Company controlled all this land. Indians in those early times would routinely set fires to burn the underbrush and keep the space open for easy hunting.

Arriving at the community of Lake Park, you would be at the end of the line for the railroad. Lake Park featured a hotel, dance hall, and (Spanaway) lake for swimming and boating. According to Andy, "you were pretty much at the edge of civilization." To travel further south meant boarding the Van Eaton stage. The Van Eaton family, founders of Eatonville, owned and operated the stage line that went three times a week from Lake Park to Eatonville.



Lake Park Hotel and "Old Betsy" at Lake Park (Spanaway) in about 1895. Photographer Henry M. Sarvant. Courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections UW26852z. From *In The Shadow of the Mountain* by Lawrence D. Anderson.

The first white settler

Andy introduced us to John McLeod who was one of the first, if not the first, white man to settle in this area we're exploring. He settled along Muck Creek sometime in the 1830s-1840s. McLeod was a Hudson Bay Company employee, married to an Indian woman. "A cantankerous Scotsman," described Andy. He was a squatter on HBC land. Later, he ran into trouble with Territorial Governor Stevens, was hauled away to Steilacoom and jailed for, supposedly, giving aid to hostile Indians. He was never convicted and later released.

Heading South

Leaving the prairie lands, we entered the forest. Andy described the little way station of Benston along Muck Creek, right on the stage line between Lake View and Eatonville (Webster Road today). Benston, like other settlements in the

area at this time including Roy, was involved in hop farming. Neighbors, Indians, and people from all around the region converged on the farms to pick these crops. For local white families, it was an opportunity to earn some extra money.

From Benston, travelers on the stage line would enter the logging region. At that time, logging was still going on with oxen—this was before the "steam donkey," a movable pulley and cable steam powered platform, used to pull the great logs. Among Andy's photographs was one of a typical family carving out a farm after the old growth timber had been harvested. The huge stumps and underbrush had to be removed before any farm could be successful. "A similar scene was probably happening somewhere on South Hill at the same time," said Andy.

Further up the line was Clear Lake; the area was also known as Glennis. Back in the 1890s, for a time, it was the site of a socialist utopian community—where everyone shared everything. Problems arose "trying to set rules with people who didn't believe in rules," said Andy. The effort eventually dissolved. However, some left and went on to establish a similar colony on the Key/Kit-sap Peninsula. Called Home Colony, it became quite famous over time. Many dignitaries visited, among them Eleanor Roosevelt.

Andy showed photographs of Clear Lake in 1896, and the Ohop Valley and Ohop Lake as seen by our travelers. Finally, we arrived in Eatonville. We saw the Eatonville Pioneer Hotel with well-dressed men in front. Another photograph showed several men with packhorses, probably heading up into the mountains to mine. A lot of prospecting was going on then—rumors of rich mineral deposits and gold, more than in Alaska—were spreading. Thomas Cobb Van Eaton established a settlement in the 1880s and founded the town of Eatonville around 1909.

We ventured further up the line to Elbe, where Andy projected a photo of a fancy tourist hotel alongside of the Nisqually River. You could leave your room, sit on the deck, and take in the view of the river. Andy also projected pictures of Longmire Springs and James Longmire's resort. James Longmire transported people from his home in Yelm up to the park, where he eventually settled himself in 1883.

The Tacoma Eastern

Andy's presentation next explored the impact of the Tacoma Eastern Railroad on this vast area southeast of Tacoma. Its huge trees and mineral resources were well-known. A rail line to tap this treasure from Tacoma was envisioned early on. An attempt was made by two brothers—sawmill owners—in the 1890s. Hard times with the economy in the late 1890s stopped the project just south of Tacoma. In 1900, a group of lumbermen started a new effort by forming the Tacoma Eastern Railroad. Beginning at today's Freighthouse Square, it traveled some 75 miles southeast through Frederickson, Graham, Kapowsin, Eat-



First locomotive on the Tacoma Eastern Railroad at Kirby, in the fall of 1901. Courtesy of Doc Weathers. From *In The Shadow of the Mountain*, by Lawrence D. Anderson.

onville, out to the La Grand power plant and up to Ashford. By 1903-04, the railroad was hauling passengers as well as logs. The passenger service dramatically opened up this remote country. People out in these areas could hop on the train and be in Tacoma in thirty minutes to an hour.

Andy's slides pictured Lake Kapowsin surrounded by vast timberland—"one tree was cut that was 300 feet tall, two hundred feet to the first limb!" Hard-working lumberjacks—mostly German, Swede, and Austrian—felled these monsters. Andy also mentioned the

Japanese lumber workers who formed their own camps. Some included steam baths with steam piped in from the local mills.

When the trees were cut—the stumps remained. Stump land was plentiful and affordable. Andy displayed a 1906 newspaper ad, "ten-acre tracts for \$250—after \$25 down, with monthly payments." Farms emerged after the grueling task of removing the stumps. Most farms supported a family with a few cows, chickens, and vegetable gardens.

Andy also projected an image of a 1905 railroad timetable. Trains left Tacoma at 9:00 in the morning and arrived in Kapowsin at 10:08, and hour and eight minutes—a trip that would take about a day and a half by wagon.

No sign of Kapowsin today

The lumber mill town of Kapowsin had its heyday at the turn of the century and went into decline rapidly as the forests surrounding it were cleared. Accelerating this decline was the planned flooding of Kapowsin Lake in the 1920s. The idea was to divert water from the Puyallup River to the lake, forming a reservoir of fresh water to supply Tacoma. The lake would have to be raised forty feet, which would take out half the town. Homes, buildings and lumber mills were condemned under eminent domain law. People left town. Ironically, the Great Depression prevented the project from going forward. Flooding of the lake never happened, but the damage was done. What



Kapowsin, Washington, viewed from the west about 1912. The main street is in the center and Kapowsin School on the hill. Courtesy of Avis Arthur. From *In The Shadow of the Mountain*, by Lawrence D. Anderson.

was left of the town and lumber mills eventually disappeared. A fishing resort and a public boat launch are all that occupy the shores of Lake Kapowsin today.

Something does remain of that era

Two miles west of Kapowsin in 1903, the Electron Power Plant construction began. The plant was powered by diverting water from the Puyallup River at a point high up in the mountains, close to Mt. Rainier National Park. A flume box was built with a precision equaling the Roman aqueducts. The flume would channel river water along the edges of the mountainous terrain. It traveled ten miles, arriving at the power plant near Kapowsin. The wooden flume was built entirely by the muscle power of men and horses. There were eight construction camps along the route. Amazingly, the entire project was completed in one year, 1903-04. The power station and flume are still standing.



Flume construction through the canyon near Camp 4 of the Electron power station, December 31, 1903. Courtesy of the University of Washington libraries, Special Collections, Puget Power 206. From *In The Shadow of the Mountain*, by Lawrence D. Anderson.

Time moves on

Andy completed our journey with photographs of Eatonville, Elbe, and Ashford taken shortly after the turn of the century. Now motor driven vehicles were showing up in the old photographs.

By 1910, automobiles were able to drive to Mt. Rainier. Blacksmith shops changed into auto repair shops. The era of stages and railroads would give way to a new mode of transportation.

Many of the small communities we visited survived as the century progressed, but some were not so lucky—now just names on old maps.

For those of us attending the May General Meeting, these long-ago people, places, and events were briefly brought back to life. We all thank Andy for his inherent “curiosity,” years of historical research and photo collecting!

Scholarship Fund 2013

This is our second year participating in the Emerald Ridge and Rogers High School scholarship program. Again this year we must thank our anonymous member for his generous donation that supports the South Hill Historical Society scholarship effort. Our scholarship committee singles out a deserving student from each of the two South Hill high schools from many applications submitted. They must be college bound seniors interested in the study of history.

This years recipients were Kate McDonald from Emerald Ridge High School and Bastian McKeen from Rogers High School. Following is their individual thank-you notes to our Society.

From Kate McDonald:

“Dear South Hill Historical Society, words cannot express my gratitude and appreciation for your generous \$500 scholarship.

I am so looking forward to beginning my next chapter at Oregon State University and settling into college life! Your scholarship will help me reach my goal of becoming a high school history teacher and sharing my love of and passion for this subject! Again, thank you so much for helping me reach my goal!

From Bastian McKeen:

Thank you so much, South Hill Historical Society, for your very gracious donation to my college adventure. Although you guys did not have to do what you did, you did anyway, and that makes you all great people in my eyes. I look forward to meeting you all and joining your organization in the near future. Thank you all so much for your generosity, I wish you all the best.

If you are interested in adding to our scholarship fund, contact President Bob Ballou at 243-845-6071 or stonebluebob@comcast.com.

Let's Eat—Annual June Luncheon



We had a large turnout for our annual June luncheon. The June meeting is our last before a two-month summer break. For this meeting we traditionally depart from our regular format. After a short business meeting—just in case anyone misses having a featured speaker—we all get time with the microphone, if only a few minutes. This year's topic, introduced by President Bob Ballou, "what was your first job?" Many interesting stories followed. A good time was had by all. Special thanks goes to Ben Peters and his helpers for, once again, setting up a tasty spread for all to enjoy.

Some Society officers move on

Our officer's terms start from the June General Meeting and continue to the following June meeting of every calendar year. This year we say good-bye to our secretarial team, Katie Bennett and Kay Murrell. Both had to decline a second term due to personal or family health issues. Also, our Vice President, Hans Zeiger, could not serve another term due to his obligations in the State Legislature. From all of us—thanks, for giving your time and talents serving our organization—very important—the society cannot continue without members offering their help running things! Terry Maves accepted his nomination and has been elected to fill the position of Vice President. Paul Hackett volunteered his own nomination and was elected Secretary. Thanks, guys! And, of course, special thanks to the steadfast officers who year after year accept nomination and re-election to their positions: Bob Ballou, Paul Hackett, Carl Vest, Ben Peters and Jerry Bates.

Parking at the Highlands

Sometimes it's hard to find a parking space when attending our General Meetings. More spaces are available just a short walk from the Community Center.

Please respect the parking restrictions in front of the Community Center building, such as the spaces reserved for "Future Dwellers." No parking is ever allowed on the sidewalk in front of the facility, not even if you're loading or unloading!

We continue to be very thankful to the Highlands management for allowing us "free" use of such excellent meeting facilities—let's give them no reason to change their minds.

Additional Parking at the Highlands

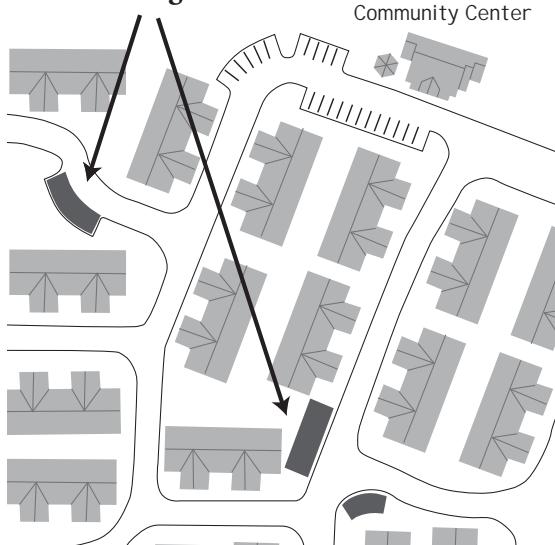


Illustration by Jerry Bates, South Hill Historical Society

Where's Czechoslovakia?



SHHS Vice President Terry Maves, center, introduces Dennis Massie seated, son of Marvella Massie. Marvella moved to the Rabbit Farms from Oklahoma when she was twelve years old. Dennis presented to the Society, on behalf of his mom, her donation of the old school room map of Europe that hung in the Meridian Heights School. Dennis's research indicates the map was probably printed between 1909 and 1918. The vintage map was printed before the emergence of many modern European states formed during the Versailles peace conference after World War I. Helping hold the map, Society president Bob Ballou.

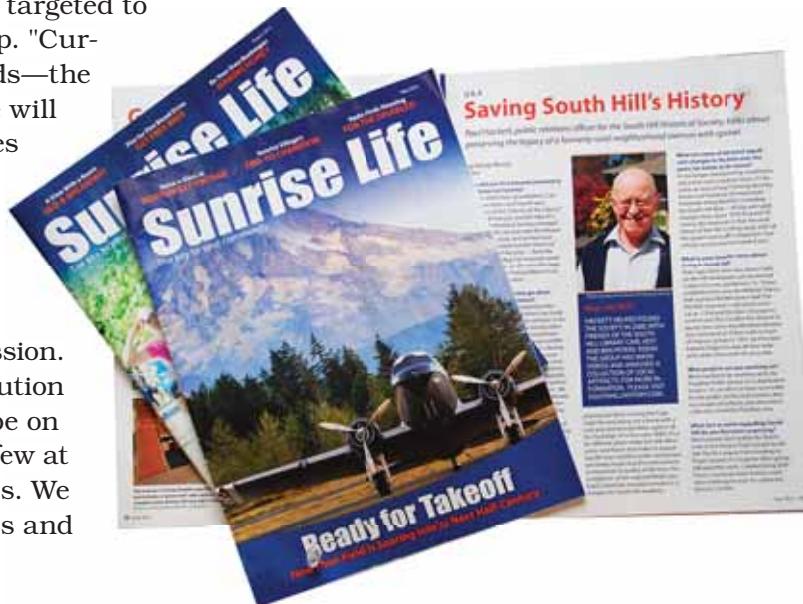
The Old McMillin Bridge will live!



According to an article in the Wednesday, July 24, *News Tribune*, the effort by Bob Peters to save the old McMillin bridge may be paying off. The Washington Department of Transportation is removing the demolition of the old bridge from its new bridge proposal. The plan now, after the new bridge is built (beginning next year), the old one will be left standing, closed to traffic. This will actually save the DOT the cost of tearing it down—\$500,000. The bridge was built in the 1930s and nationally recognized as an engineering milestone. See the 2010 Fall issue of this newsletter on our website southhillhistory.com for a more detailed history.

We made the June issue

A new local magazine covering South Hill and Puyallup is showing up in many mailboxes. *Sunrise Life* magazine has been publishing monthly since May of this year. It's called by its editor, Randy Woods, a "hyper-local" magazine and is targeted to 5,000 homes in South Hill and Puyallup. "Currently it's about 52 pages, 50 percent ads—the sole revenue generator. Each month, we will bring the readers news, features, profiles and photography that captures the spirit of this fast growing and diverse region," says Randy. The June issue featured our own Paul Hackett in an interview format, discussing the South Hill Historical Society's history and mission. Unfortunately, its rather limited distribution means many of our members may not be on the magazine's direct mail list—only a few at the May General Meeting received copies. We have them all—destined for our archives and available for borrowing.



From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

Welcome to our new members

**Alberta Hagen
Alan & Linda Hoenhous**

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, poppaben2002@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.

Updated Roster Available

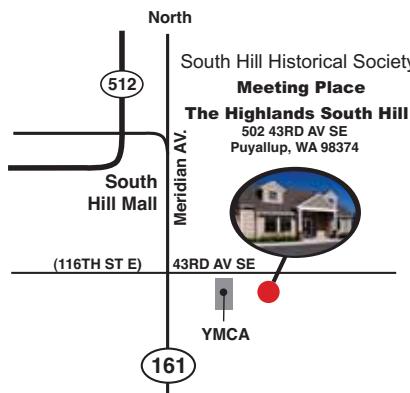
A printed roster including members' home and e-mail addresses, plus phone numbers is available upon request (*restricted to members only*). Call me—Ben Peters—at 253-845-7028.

Dues Reminder

I will attach a sticky note, with a renewal form, to the Society newsletter mailed closest to your renewal date.

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.

Where to Find Us



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

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 Nordin
Teresa Best Mark & Dorothy Norris
Jerry Bates Gloria O'Kelly
Katherine Bennett Ron & Lois Pearson
Marilyn Burnett Wes & Suzy Perkins
Debbie Burnett 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 Jean Ross
Ira Gabrielson Stan & Margery Salmon
Don & Mary Glaser Bonnie Starkel
Calvin & Amy Goings 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
Maybelle Hoenhous Neil & Celia Vincent
Matt Holm Joan Vosler
Leslie & Velma Huff W. Louise Walsworth
Jim Kastama W. Lynn Williams
John Knierim Lenore Nicolet Winton
Mike Kupfer Ed Zeiger
Art Larson Hans Zeiger
Terry Maves Allan S. & Ellen M. Zulauf
Olive McDonough

South Hill Historical Society Officers

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

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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: